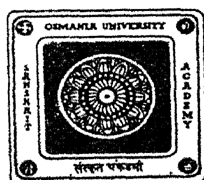
SANSKRIT ACADEMY SERIES No. 3.
(POPULAR SERIES No. 1)

STORIES FROM THE

KATHĀSARITSĀGARA



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CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

The art of story telling is as popular as it is ancient. Stories are listened to and related with absorbing interest by young and old alike, among the primitive as well as highly civilized people. And it is curious to note, and it is somewhat of a mystery, that a very large number of popular tales are known in a more or less similar form in countries widely removed from one another, both geographically and culturally.

India is considered to be the home of story telling. It is common knowledge that most of the well-known fables and folk-tales of Europe and the Middle East are of Indian origin. The origin of the Indian Story can be traced back to the Vedas. Already in the Ṛgveda we find clear indications of the then existing mass of folk-tales. The development of the Indian Story can be easily traced through the Brāhmaṇas, the Upaniṣads, the Epics, and the Purāṇas, down to the Kāvyas.

The stories presented in this collection have been selected from the best known book of Sanskrit stories, the Kathāsaritsāgara. The author of this monumental work, Somadeva, belongs to the 11th century A.D., but the stories told by him go back to a much earlier period. As is well-known, the Kathāsaritsāgara is based upon one of the versions of the now lost Bṛhatkathā of Guṇāḍhya. Guṇāḍhya is said to have written his work in the Paiśācī Prakrit, probably in the third Century of the Christian era. The stories, however, were not his original contribution. They were, in all likelihood, collected from the folk-tales of the period, handed down from earlier times. It is also likely that Somadeva himself included in his work some stories which had sprung up during the seven or eight centuries following Guṇāḍhya's period.

The stories contained in this collection thus represent fantasy and imagination of the Indian people as a whole from time immemorial down to the 11th Century. The reader will find in them flights of imagination, as well as keen observation of human nature, presented in a fascinating way, which makes them as fine a literature as the works of well-known authors and poets. The element of fantasy contained in most of these stories does not, as the reader will appreciate, detract from their charm and naturalness. In fact it adds to their romantic character. The reader will also find in these stories poignant and pathetic situations and sublime characters as well as superhuman fairies and

ghosts. He will be moved by the story of Devadāsa and his wife (pp. 2-3); he will be amused by the story of the two rogues—Śiva and Mādhava—(pp. 71-78); and he will gain insight into the human character by the stories of Kīrtisenā and Harasvāmin (pp. 14-20 and pp. 79-80). The stories neither preach nor moralise. They are just stories.

The twelve stories presented here are dovetailed to the two main stories of Kaliṅgasenā and Kanakarekhā. This device is quite common in Sanskrit Literature. But, whereas in some other authors the main story appears often interrupted (much to the annoyance of the reader), in the Kathāsaritsāgara, the author has taken care to see that each sub-story, while retaining its individual interest, not only does not interrupt the main story, but actually adds to its charm. It should also be mentioned here that, for various reasons, many of the sub-stories contained in the original Kathāsaritsāgara have been omitted in the present collection.

Translation from Sanskrit into English, or for that matter, from any one language into another, is not an easy task. It needs a great deal of skill and experience to preserve the sense of the original as well as to maintain the flow and idiom of the language of adaptation. How far the present translator has succeeded in his attempt is for the readers to judge. He has on the whole tried to be faithful to the original, except for omitting a few lines here and there, which the modern reader may not have appreciated. It is to be hoped that the book will make good reading.

The Popular Series of our publications, of which the present work is the first, has been introduced with a view to give the general reader some idea of the vast and varied treasures of Sanskrit Literature. As these stories will show, Sanskrit Literature is not confined to only religion, philosophy and morals: life has found as much expression here as devotion and reflection and moralising.

Shri K. R. Chanderasekharan and Shri K. N. Acharya of the English Department have very kindly gone through the entire press copy of the book and have made valuable suggestion for improving the idiom. For this, the editor wishes to acknowledge his indebtedness to the two colleagues.

I. KALIṄGASENĀ

विचित्रसदसत्कर्मनिबद्धाः सञ्चरन्ति हि ।
जन्तवस्त्रिजगत्यस्मिन् शुभाशुभफलाप्तये ॥

'Fettered by their own diverse actions, good or bad, human beings wander through the three worlds in order to reap the happy or evil consequences thereof.'

I—KALIṄGASENĀ

Once upon a time there flourished, on the banks of the Vitastā, a famous city called Takṣaśilā. The city was ruled over by a king called Kaliṅgadatta who was a devout Buddhist and whose subjects also were followers of Buddha. He looked after his subjects as a father would and was to them like a teacher. He had a queen of noble birth. She was called Tārādattā.

While the king and the queen were living happily in their kingdom, there occurred a festival in Indra's realm. Among the Apsarasas who were exhibiting their dances, Surabhidattā, one of the more celebrated among the dancers of the Court, was not to be seen. Indra, by his power of contemplation, discovered that she was in the company of a Vidyādhara in a part of the Nandana garden. He became angry at the misdemeanour of the two lovers and said to himself thus: "She is acting wilfully and with scant regard to my authority. I cannot blame that poor Vidyādhara: he could not but be attracted and overpowered by her beauty. This wretched damsel alone is the offender, having courted a being of a lower order and having brought him to the Nandana garden."

Arguing thus, Indra excused the young Vidyādhara and punished the Apsaras with a curse: "O vile woman, be thou born in the world of mortals!

Thou shalt return to this celestial world only after thou becomest the mother, according to the divine decree, of a son who knows no death." Surabhidattā then willed to be born as the daughter of Tārādattā, Queen of Kaliṅgadatta. The latter that night saw in her dream a flash of light falling from heaven and entering her womb. The king was filled with joy when she related her dream to him the next morning. He said to her, " Divine beings are sometimes born as human beings as a result of some curse. So, my dear, I think that some celestial being has entered your womb."

On hearing his words, the queen remarked that it was certain that one's actions would lead to pain or pleasure. In support of this she related the following story to the king.

1. STORY OF DHARMADATTA AND NĀGAŚRĪ

There was a king in the country of Kosala. He was called Dharmadatta. He had a queen called Nāgaśrī, who was very much devoted to him. In course of time I was born as their daughter. When I was quite young, my mother, all of a sudden, recollected the story of her former birth and addressed her husband thus: " My dear, I am reminded of my former birth. If I were to relate it, I am most certain to die. For it is said that the recollection of one's own former birth, if recounted, will result in one's death. I am, therefore, much distressed."

The king replied, " I too am recollecting my former birth like you. Let us narrate our stories to each other. Who can

prevent what is destined to be?" Thus being pressed by the king, she related her story as follows:

" In my previous birth I was a virtuous maidservant in the house of a Brāhmaṇa, named Mādhava, who lived in this kingdom. Devadāsa was my husband and he worked as a servant to a merchant. We lived in a house befitting our position and supported ourselves by means of food brought from the houses of our masters. Our wealth consisted of myself and my husband, a big pot and a drinking vessel, a broom and a cot. We were living happily and our home was never tainted with sorrow. If we had more than one of any variety of clothes, we presented it to a beggar. A terrible famine then visited our country and as a consequence the food that we could get from our masters became less and less and we were emaciated through hunger. When we were in this condition, a guest, wearied by long journey, came to our house one day at meal time. We offered him the little food that we had, at the risk of our lives. When he had dined and gone, life departed from my husband as if it was cross with him for not caring for it as much as for a guest. I lit my husband's funeral pyre and fell into it to free myself from the clutches of sorrow. It was then that I was born in Rājagṛha and became your queen."

On hearing her story, King Dharmadatta said, " My beloved, I was, in the previous birth, your husband Devadāsa, the servant of the merchant. The story of my previous birth has come back to my memory."

King Dharmadatta and Queen Nāgaśrī then left this world. When my parents thus left me alone, my aunt took me to her house, and brought me up. When I grew into a maid, a sage came to my aunt's house as a guest. She asked me to tend on him. Through his favour I obtained you as my husband. In this way, good deeds lead to good fortune.

When he heard her story, the noble Kaliṅgadatta said that it was true that even a little virtuous deed would result in immense good fortune, and told her the following story of the seven Brāhmaṇas.

2. STORY OF THE SEVEN BRĀHMAṆAS

In the town of Kuṇḍinapura there lived in former days a Brāhmaṇa teacher who had seven Brāhmaṇa pupils. Once, when there was a famine, the teacher sent his pupils to Gomān, his father-in-law, with a request that a cow may be given to him. The emaciated pupils went to the father-in-law and begged for the cow on behalf of their teacher. He gave them a milch cow but, being a miser, he did not think of feeding the Brāhmaṇa guests. While driving the cow to their town, the poor starving Brāhmaṇas fainted on the way. The teacher's house was far away and they could not devise any means of obtaining food for their sustenance. They thought that after their death the cow also would perish in that desert devoid of trees, water and men, and that the cow would thus serve no purpose. As it was a time of dire necessity, they thought they might keep their body and soul together by consuming a portion of the flesh of the cow and offer the rest to their teacher. The pupils thereupon sacrificed the cow in accordance with their scriptures, partook of a portion of the flesh after offering it to the gods and the manes, and approached their teacher with what was left. They saluted him and reported to him what they had done. The teacher was pleased with their truthfulness, although they were at fault. Within seven days they all died, but came back to life again as a result of their truthfulness.

In course of time, Queen Tārādattā gave birth to a female child. The child's father, Kaliṅgadatta, did not rejoice at the birth of a daughter, wishing that a son had been born instead. He thought that a daughter was a source of sorrow while a son was a

source of joy. While he was brooding with sorrow on the birth of a daughter, an old and experienced Brāhmaṇa of the place approached him and consoled him thus : " O King, why do you grieve at the birth of a lovely daughter ? Daughters are really superior to sons and help us in this as well as in the next world. Why should kings be desirous of having sons who are always covetous of the kingdom of their father ? Have we not heard that kings like Kuntibhoja escaped from the insults of sages like Durvāsas through their well-behaved daughters such as Kuntī ? How can a son benefit his father as much as a daughter can ? In this connection I shall narrate to you the story of Sulocanā, which you should carefully reflect on :—

3. THE STORY OF SULOCANĀ

There was once a young king, Suṣeṇa, living on the Citrakūṭa Hill. At the foot of the hill, the king had planted a beautiful garden. In the centre of the garden he had constructed a tank full of lovely lotuses. For want of queens befitting him, the king passed his time in loneliness on the bank of the tank. One day the celestial damsel, Rambhā, returning from the palace of Indra, happened to pass that way in her aerial passage. She saw the king diverting himself in the garden. Being attracted by his charming appearance, she descended from her heavenly course, assumed a human form and approached him. The king was astonished at her inconceivable beauty and tried to divine who she was. She was not a human being because her feet did not touch the earth, nor did she wink her eyes. She must be some divine being. He was afraid that she might disappear if he questioned her. So he accosted her and they entered into conversation with each other. Gradually the acquaintance developed into intimacy and confessing their mutual affection, they decided to marry.

He lived happily with her for a long time and gave her no reason to recollect heaven. With the help of a fairy friend she filled the king's palace with gold. In course of time she conceived and brought forth a daughter of extraordinary beauty. As soon as the child was born, she revealed to the king that she was the heavenly nymph Rambhā, that she had been attracted by his beauty and that it was a convention with them, the celestial damsels, to leave their lovers as soon as they bore them children. She asked him to take care of the child. They would be united again in heaven after the marriage of their daughter. Having communicated this to the king, Rambhā disappeared.

At the departure of Rambhā, the forlorn king was about to commit suicide, but was dissuaded by his ministers. Gradually, regaining strength of mind, he engaged himself in bringing up the child who was destined to be the cause of his re-union with his beloved. As she had exquisite eyes, he named his daughter Sulocanā.

In course of time she grew into a maiden and one day, while she was playing in the garden, a young sage of Kaśyapa family, named Vatsa, who was strolling in the garden, happened to see her. Although he was engaged in penance, he was smitten with love for her at first sight and mused thus: "This girl has an astonishingly beautiful form. If I do not obtain her as my wife, what better fruit can I have for my penance?"

Sulocanā too felt attracted by the young sage, and wondered who that calm and handsome man with a rosary and a pot could be. She approached and saluted him, casting, as it were, a garland of blue lotuses round his neck in the form of her looks. His mind restless with emotion, Vatsa blessed her and wished her a suitable husband. Her modesty being overcome by the attraction she felt for the handsome youth, Sulocanā spoke to him with her head slightly bent down, "If you are not joking, you may approach my father and request him for my hand." Enquiring of her servants

about her parentage, the sage approached Suṣeṇa and requested him for permission to marry his daughter. The king saw that the youth was unsurpassed in his penance and beauty, welcomed him as an honourable guest and said:

"Sir, this is my daughter, born of the Apsaras Rambhā. As she returned to heaven leaving me behind, she herself told me that we should be re-united through the marriage of this girl. You have to devise how to achieve this."

The sage reflected a moment: "Can I not achieve this by expending a portion of my penance?" Then he turned to Suṣeṇa and said: "O King, it is not difficult for me." Then he looked up towards heaven and said, "O Gods, by virtue of a moiety of my penance, may this king go to heaven bodily and enjoy re-union with Rambhā!" At this a divine voice was heard by the king and his assembly, saying clearly, "Let it be so!"

The king then gave his daughter Sulocanā in marriage to Vatsa, and ascended to heaven. There he attained a celestial form and with the permission of Indra enjoyed the company of Rambhā for a long time.

"In this way," the Brāhmaṇa continued, "King Suṣeṇa fulfilled his desire with the help of his daughter. Only daughters of noble nature will be born in the houses of kings like you. There can be no doubt that some divine being has been born as your daughter through some curse. Therefore, O King, do not feel unhappy at the birth of a daughter."

On hearing the above story from the old Brāhmaṇa, King Kaliṅgadatta exchanged his sorrow for joy. He named his beautiful daughter Kaliṅgasenā. In course of time she grew into a charming maiden.

Once while Kaliṅgasenā was playing on the terrace of her palace, she was seen by Somaprabhā, daughter of Maya, who was passing that way in her aerial passage. On seeing Kaliṅgasenā, Somaprabhā was attracted to her and reflected : " She must be a divine being born in this king's house through some curse. Undoubtedly she was my friend in the previous birth. My heart which has become attached to her tells me so. I shall, therefore, make friends with her on my own initiative."

Somaprabhā then alighted on the top of the palace invisible to Kaliṅgasenā, lest the latter should be frighhtened by her sudden appearance. She slowly approached the princess, having assumed the form of a maiden. Kaliṅgasenā thought that some beautiful princess was approaching her and that she desired her friendship. She stood up, welcomed Somaprabhā and embraced her as a mark of her affection. She seated the new-comer by her side and enquired of her about her name and parentage. Somaprabhā told the princess that she would relate everything in course of time. As a result of mutual affection they soon became friends.

One day Somaprabhā said to Kaliṅgasenā : " Friend, you are a princess. But friendship with princes is very difficult to maintain. Even the slightest fault will upset them and make them angry. Do you not know the story of the prince who contracted a close friendship with a merchant, but who ordered

his execution for a trivial fault, although the merchant had saved his life on more than one occasion ? Princes do not remember the favours received by them, and friendship with them is like friendship with vampires. So my dear, never think of contracting friendship with a prince though you are a princess."

"Yes, my friend, I know," replied Kaliṅgasenā, "They are not princes, but demons. You need not be concerned about me. I shall never associate myself with a prince."

Somaprabhā was glad at the assurance given by her friend. The two friends then engaged themselves in conversation for a long time. When evening approached, Somaprabhā took leave of the princess saying that she had to go more than five hundred miles and that she would return in the morning. She then flew up to the sky while Kaliṅgasenā watched her with astonishment. She was not able to guess whether Somaprabhā was a Siddha woman, an Apsaras or a Vidyādharī ; but she was sure that her friend was not a mortal. "Divine beings at times make friends with mortals," she thought. Kaliṅgsenā congratulated herself on having secured Somaprabhā as her friend and decided to find out her name and parentage when she returned in the morning.

The next morning Somaprabhā came to Kaliṅgsenā with a box containing several mechanical dolls for her diversion. Kaliṅgasenā welcomed and embraced her and seated her by her side. She said to Somaprabhā,

" Friend, in your absence I passed the night as if it were a year ! Tell me, if you happen to know, how we were related in our previous birth to have such affection for each other in this birth." Somaprabhā replied, " I have no knowledge of my previous birth. Even sages do not know such things. If there be some who know, they should have acquired much merit before."

Kaliṅgasenā then asked her, " Tell me, friend, to what divine race your father belongs. May I know your name which I presume will be pleasing to all ears ? Why have you brought this box and what does it contain ?"

Somaprabhā replied, " You know there is an Asura well-known in all the three worlds, named Maya. He discarded his Asura nature and took refuge with Viṣṇu, under whose protection he built a wonderful palace for Indra. The Asuras became angry with him as he had joined the Devas. For fear of the Asuras, he built a wonderful palace in a magic cave of the Vindhyas inaccessible to them. My father, Maya, has two daughters. The elder, called Svayamprabhā, who has taken a vow of celibacy, lives in his house. I am the younger, named Somaprabhā, and I am married to Nalakūbara, son of Kubera. I have been trained by my father to make several kinds of small machines. I have brought this box full of such things for your diversion."

Then Somaprabhā opened the box and showed Kaliṅgasenā the mechanical dolls. On pressing a

knob a doll soared up to the sky and returned with a garland of flowers. Another doll similarly brought a cool drink. A third doll danced and yet another told stories. Having diverted Kaliṅgasenā in this manner for a time, Somaprabhā replaced the dolls in the box, took leave of her friend and flew back to her home, leaving the box with her friend.

Kaliṅgasenā was much surprised at seeing the magic dolls. Her astonishment made her insensible to hunger and she did not eat anything that day. Her mother apprehended that she had suddenly taken ill and got her examined by a physician. The physician said that she had lost her appetite owing to some pleasure and not out of illness as he could find out from her smiling face and expanded eyes. Her mother then asked Kaliṅgasenā the cause of her pleasure and the latter related to her the story of her friendship with Somaprabhā. Her mother approved of her friendship with a commendable girl and Kaliṅgasenā began to eat her food as before.

Another day, Somaprabhā came to Kaliṅgasenā and learnt what had happened in her absence and had a confidential talk with her. She said she had made known to her relatives her friendship with Kaliṅgasenā and they had approved of it and had given her permission to meet her friend daily. So she asked Kaliṅgasenā to obtain a similar permission from her relatives so that she might freely go with her without provoking any suspicion. Immediately Kaliṅgasenā took Somaprabhā by the hand and led her to the presence of her

parents and introduced her to them, relating her name and parentage. King Kaliṅgadatta and Queen Tārādattā received her with respect and were greatly pleased with her appearance and manners. They said, " O Child, we are glad to leave Kaliṅgasenā to your care. You may both go together wherever you please." Somaprabhā and Kaliṅgasenā were glad to get the permission and took leave of them. They then went for recreation to the Vihāra built by the king, taking with them the box of magic dolls. As soon as they reached there, Somaprabhā took out a magic Yakṣa from the box and sent him to get all requisitess for the worship of Buddha. The Yakṣa travelled a long way through the sky and returned in a short time bringing a collection of pearls, gems and golden lotuses. Somaprabhā made offerings to Buddha with them and made the whole place glow with rare radiance. Seeing this, the king went there with his queen and asked Somaprabhā about the performances of the mechanical dolls. Then Somaprabhā said to the king, " Sir, my father has manufactured a large variety of mechanical dolls for me ; they are all made on the model of this world-machine which is made of the five elements. I shall describe some of them to you. Here is a machine made chiefly out of earth. It blocks all openings so securely that they cannot be opened by any one. The machine manufactured out of water appears as if it has life. The machine manufactured out of fire gives out flames of fire. The machine made out of air travels in all directions, while the one made out of ether can carry on a conversation,

I got all these machines from my father. He has one machine which can confer immortality, but only he knows how to operate it." As it was midday by that time, Somaprabhā bade good-bye to the king and, with his permission, took Kaliṅgasenā with her in a flying machine and went to her sister who was living in her father's house. In a moment's time they found themselves by the side of Svayamprabhā in a cave of the Vindhya Mountain. Kaliṅgasenā there saw Svayamprabhā wearing a snow-white dress, her hair matted, and a rosary of beads in her hands. She welcomed Kaliṅgasenā who was introduced to her by Somaprabhā and offered her some fruits. She said, "Dear friend, if you eat these fruits, you will not grow old and lose your beauty."

"It is for this purpose that I have brought you here," said Somaprabhā to Kaliṅgasenā.

No sooner had Kaliṅgasenā eaten the fruits than her body became as if anointed with nectar. She had become immortal. Walking about the place in curiosity, she saw a wonderful garden in front, with a pond full of golden lotuses and trees laden with fruits. She thought she was in a strange world created by the magic of Maya. Here one had the illusion of a wall where there was no wall and of no wall where there was one ; or of water where there was no water and of no water where there was water. The place was said to have been visited by the monkeys in their search for Sītā in days gone by : they could not get out of it

except with the help of Somaprabhā. After Kaliṅgasenā had seen all these strange things and bidden good-bye to Svayamprabhā, she was taken back to her father's house in Takṣaśilā by Somaprabhā. The king and the queen were filled with joy when Kaliṅgasenā described to them all that she had seen.

One day Somaprabhā said to Kaliṅgasenā, "Our friendship continues so long as you are unmarried; if you are married and repair to your husband's house, how can I meet you there? I cannot approach my friend's husband and obtain his consent. As for the mother-in-law, she will prey upon her daughter-in-law as a wolf upon a lamb. I shall relate to you in this connection the story of Kīrtisenā."

4. STORY OF KĪRTISENĀ

There was once in Pāṭaliputra a prince among merchants who was, as it were, significantly named Dhanapālita. He had a daughter called Kīrtisenā who was unsurpassed in beauty and whom he loved most dearly. She was brought to Magadha and given in marriage to a rich merchant, Devasena by name. The virtuous Devasena had a wicked mother. She saw that Kīrtisenā was very dear to her husband, and, burning with anger, she began to tease her daughter-in-law in his absence. Kīrtisenā was not bold enough to report her mother-in-law's conduct to her husband.

One day, at the instance of his relatives, Devasena prepared to go to the town of Valabhī in connection with business. Then Kīrtisenā said to her husband, "My dear, till now I did not like to report to you the conduct of your mother. She has been teasing me all these days even while you have been here. I do not know what she will do to me in your absence." He was surprised to

hear her words and felt concerned about her future. He slowly approached his mother and said to her, "Mother, I am entrusting Kīrtisenā to you during my absence. Do not ill-treat her; she is the scion of a noble family." Then his mother summoned Kīrtisenā and in her presence said to Devasena with rolling eyes, " Ask her to relate what I have done to her to incite you like this. It is she who sows dissension in the family. As for me, my son, I treat you both alike." Devasena was satisfied with his mother's cunning words and felt no anxiety about Kīritsenā; but the latter remained silent with an anxious smile on her lips. The next day Devasena left for Valabhī.

Devasena's mother withdrew all the attendants serving Kīrtisenā who was pining with grief of separation from her husband. Then she entered into a plot with a maid-servant, had Kīrtisenā brought secretly into her room and stripped her of her clothes, then saying, " You wretch, do you want to win over my son?", she caught hold of her by her hair and had her thrashed by the maid-servant. Then she threw Kīrtisenā into a subterrenean cell and fastened the door with a strong bolt.

The wicked woman gave her daughter-in-law only half a plate of food daily in the evening. " If she were to die while her husband is away," she thought, " I shall inform him on his arrival that she offended me and then ran away some days ago." Kīrtisenā, who was not used to such harsh treatment, wept for her condition and reflected: " My husband is rich, I was born in a good family, I am beautiful, and my conduct is good. Still, alas, I am undergoing all this suffering through the cruelty of my mother-in-law! It is for this reason that parents feel unhappy at the birth of a daughter."

In this wretched condition, Kīrtisenā one day by chance found a spade in the cell. With the spade she began to dig a subterranean passage from the cell. Providentially, the passage led to her own apartment in the palace. She took some clothes and money, left the room and went out of the city before dawn.

"It is not proper for me," she thought, "to go to my father's house in this sorry plight. How can I relate my condition to him, and who will believe my story? I should somehow manage to reach my husband. Her husband is the only refuge for a virtuous woman, either in this world or in the next." Thinking in this strain, she washed herself clean in a lake and put on the dress of a prince. In this disguise she went to the market place and rented a room in a merchant's house. The following day she made friends with the merchant, called Samudrasena, who was preparing to go to Valabhī. She told him, "I am troubled by the members of my family. I want, therefore, to go to Valabhī where I have some relatives." The merchant, who believed her to be a prince, allowed her to accompany him and looked after her on the way.

To avoid tolls, the caravan of merchants followed the way leading through a forest instead of the one passing through the plains and frequented by the people. In a few days they reached the outskirts of the forest and encamped there for the night. A tumultous noise was heard at dead of night, and the merchants knew that they were being attacked by robbers. A fierce fight ensued between the merchants and the robbers, which ended with the slaying of Samudrasena and all his followers and the plunder of their merchandise by the robbers. As Kīrtisenā became aware of the impending danger, she deplored her own condition: "Alas! the troubles of the unfortunate follow in quick succession! To escape death from the hands of my mother-in-law, I have followed this course. Here too death has become imminent to me! If I am caught and killed by the robbers, my mother-in-law will report to my husband that I eloped with somebody to whom I was attached. If I am discovered by the robbers to be a woman and subjected to violation, it will be worse than death. So I must protect myself and not depend on the merchant. A woman, indeed may sacrifice even her friends when her virtue is at stake." Coming to this decision, she searched among the trees and discovered a small pit in the forest nearby. She stepped into it, and covered

herself with grass and leaves and remained there the whole night. The next morning, when everything was calm, she came out of the pit and started on her journey, though she did not know which direction to take. Providentially, she encountered an itinerant mendicant who gave her directions regarding the way she was to follow. She travelled the whole day and when night approached, she lay herself down in the hollow of a big tree, covering it with a log of wood. At dawn she observed through the openings in the log a terrible demoness approaching the tree with her sons. She thought that although she had escaped from the robbers, she would now be devoured by the demoness. While she was musing in this manner, the demoness without noticing Kīrtisenā ascended the tree and her sons followed her. When they settled on the tree, her sons said to their mother, "Mother, we are hungry. Give us something to eat." The mother replied, "My darlings, I could'nt get anything, even though I searched the whole of the great cemetery. I begged the assembly of goblins, but they too did not give me anything. I reported the matter to Bhairava and begged for some sustenance. He said to me, 'Go to the capital of Vasudatta, which is not far off. He protects this forest, collects the toll and chastises the thieves. Once fatigued from hunting he slept for a while in the forest; then a centipede quickly entered his ear without his knowledge. In course of time it multiplied in his head and in consequence he took ill and is now reduced to a skeleton. The doctors were not able to diagnose his malady. If nobody is able to divine the cause, he will die in a few days. You may prey upon his flesh which will last you for six months.' In this way, my darlings, Bhairava has allotted me some food with a time limit attached to it, and so what can I give you now?" The children then said to their mother, "Tell us, mother, will the king survive if the cure for the disease is known? Tell us also, if you know, how he can be cured of such a disease." She replied, "The king will certainly survive if the cure for the disease is known. I shall tell you how this terrible disease can be cured. His head must first be anointed with hot ghee. He should then be made to sit for a long time in the hot midday sun. A long, fine, hallow bamboo

should be placed in his ear. The other end of the hollow bamboo should be put in a hole in a basin placed on a pot of cold water. Unable to bear the heat of the sun, the centipedes will come out of his head through the ear and, attracted by the cold, they will fall into the pot of cold water, issuing out through the hollow bamboo. In this way the king can be cured of his fatal disease."

From her hole in the trunk of the tree, Kīrtisenā heard the conversation of the demons and thought as follows: "If I escape from the demons with life, I shall go and cure the king of his disease in the manner described by the spirit. This king who imposes light tolls lives on the outskirts of this forest. Attracted by this advantage, all the traders pass this way. The late Samudrasena, the merchant, informed me of this. I am sure my husband also will come by this way. So I shall go to the capital of Vasudatta and cure the king of his disease and wait the arrival of my husband." With thoughts like these, she passed the night with difficulty and in the morning, when the demons had gone their way, she came out of the hole in the tree and continued her journey through the forest in her male attire. In the afternoon she met a shepherd. On hearing her story, he was filled with pity for her long sojourn and informed her, that she was not far from the city of Vasudatta, the noble king, who was nearing death due to an incurable disease. She said to him, "If anybody can take me to the presence of the king, I can cure him, for I know the remedy for his disease." The shepherd replied, "I am bound to his city. If you accompany me, I shall try to introduce you to him." On her agreeing to do so, the shepherd boy took her to the city of Vasudatta and introduced her to the doorkeeper of the king, saying that she knew the cure for the king's malady. The doorkeeper gladly reported the matter to the king who immediately ordered her to be admitted to his presence. Her very presence was a source of solace to the king and he promised to give her half his kingdom if she should cure him of his illness. He also said to her, "Today I dreamt that a lady removed a black blanket from my back. So I am sure that you will be able to cure me." Kīrtisenā said to

the king, "The day is coming to a close now. I shall cure you tomorrow. Do not be dejected." For the time being she applied ghee to his head and he had some relief and spent a peaceful night. At this, all the attendants thought their good fortune had sent some god in the form of this physician to relieve them of their anxiety. The queen personally attended to the comfort of Kīrtisenā and provided her with quarters for the night with the appropriate retinue. The next day, at noon, in the presence of all the ministers and the inmates of the harem, Kīrtisenā extracted from the head of the king, through the ear, a hundred and fifty centipedes in the manner taught by the demoness, to the astonishment of all present. She kept the worms in the pot and gave a bath to the king with oil and hot water. Gradually the king was relieved of his illness and became happy. The king was not a little surprised when he saw the worms in the pot and thought that he had really had a rebirth. His capital bore a festive appearance on his recovery and the king busied himself with fulfilling his promise to his saviour. When she declined to accept the gift of half the kingdom, the king lavished presents of lands, elephants, horses and jewels on her while the queen and the ministers vied with each other in presenting jewels to her who had saved the life of their lord. Kīrtisenā deposited all her presents with the king with a request to keep them for some days and promised to take them when the proper time arrived. While she lived there for a short time in male attire winning the respect of all, she heard the news that Devasena, her husband, had arrived there from Valabhī. She proceeded immediately to the place where he was camping and was glad to see him, like a peacock at the sight of the clouds, and prostrated before him with tears of joy in her eyes. Her husband recognised her although she was disguised in male attire. It is really a matter for surprise that the heart of Devasena did not break to pieces on seeing the condition to which his wife had been reduced. When Kīrtisenā discovered herself to him, her husband was astonished and the other merchants were equally surprised. King Vasudatta also rushed to the place at the news of Devasena's arrival. At the request of the king, Kīrtisenā reported the story of

her sojourn as a result of the cruel treatment of her mother-in-law. On learning of the cruel conduct of his mother towards Kīrtisenā, Devasena was not inclined to go to his mother again. He was filled with anger and astonishment at her conduct. All the people who heard Kīrtisenā's story were glad of her providential escape from danger and her union with her husband. The king declared that the troubles undergone by Kīrtisenā for union with her husband had belittled those experienced by Sītā for union with Rāma. "I shall consider her to be my sister as she granted me life," he said. Kīrtisenā then requested the king to bestow on her husband the lands, elephants, horses and jewels which were kindly presented to her by him and which she had kept with him. When the king did so, Devasena decided to live in that city alone, in prosperity, with his wife and abandoned his mother for ever.

Having related the above story, Somaprabhā said to Kaliṅgasenā, "O Princess, do you now see what sort of difficulties and dangers caused by mothers-in-law and sisters-in-law attend a daughter-in-law? So I wish you a husband's house which is devoid of a mother-in-law or a cruel sister-in-law." As darkness was falling by the time the story came to a close, Somaprabhā gave a parting embrace to Kaliṅgasenā and started to go to her residence. The latter followed her to the top of her palace and was wistfully looking at her as she ascended to the skies. A young Vidyādhara prince called Madanavega, who happened to pass that way in the sky, saw her in that state. His mind was attracted, as if by magic, by her beauty which was unsurpassed in the three worlds. "If we can find such beauty among human beings," he thought, "fie upon Vidyādharas and Apsarasas. What is my

life worth to me if I cannot obtain her for my wife? But being a Vidyādhara, how can I court a mortal woman?" Revolving thus in his mind he recollected the power called Prajñapti, which immediately stood before him and said, "She is not in reality a woman. She is an Apsaras who has fallen through a curse. She is born as the daughter of King Kaliṅgadatta." Obtaining this information from his power of Prajñapti, he went home and began to suffer the pangs of love. He thought it was not proper form to abduct her by force and so decided to perform penance to Śiva to obtain her by his favour. The next day he repaired to the Ṛṣabha mountain and commenced performing penance, standing on one leg and abstaining from food. In a short time Śiva became pleased with his severe penance and appeared before him. He advised Madanavega thus: "This maid, Kaliṅgasenā, is famed for her beauty in the world. There is no husband suited to her in beauty, except the King of Vatsa. He desires to win her, but does not seek her for fear of causing displeasure to Queen Vāsavadattā. This princess too, hearing of him from Somaprabhā and attracted by his beauty, desires to win him as her husband through self-choice (Svayaṁvara). So before her marriage with the King of Vatsa can take place and while she is yet anxious to marry him, you should assume the form of King of Vatsa, have access to her and obtain her for your wife in the Gāndharva style. In this way alone you can obtain Kaliṅgasenā." Advised in this manner by Śiva, Madanavega saluted

him and returned to his residence on the slopes of the Kālakūṭa mountain.

In the meantime, Somaprabhā was everyday coming to Kaliṅgasenā in Takṣaśilā remaining with her all through the day and returning to her house in the night by means of her machines. One day Kaliṅgasenā said to Somaprabhā in secret, "My friend, I am going to tell you something which you should reveal to nobody. I think my marriage is approaching. Many kings have sent messengers to woo me. My father sent them back with civil replies. But the messenger of King Prasenajit of Śrāvastī was treated with great respect by my father. He had consultations with my mother regarding this proposal. I think Prasenajit has been selected as my bridegroom. He is approved by my father and mother as of a worthy family. He is born in that race to which Ambā and Ambālikā, the paternal grandmothers of the Kauravas and the Pāṇḍavas, belong. I am sure, my friend, that I shall be offered by my father to King Prasenajit of Śrāvastī." Hearing these words, Somaprabhā was very much grieved and began to shed tears. When questioned about the cause of her sorrow, the daughter of Maya, who had seen the whole world, replied, "My dear friend, of the qualities such as youth, handsomeness, noble lineage, good breeding and wealth, which are sought for in a bridegroom, the foremost are youth and lineage, and others come afterwards. Prasenajit is old in age as I have seen him. A jasmine flower of course belongs to a good species ; but of what avail is the species

when it has faded ? If you are united with him who is gray-haired, you will have to be pitied with your dejected face like a lotus burnt by frost. So I became sad. I would have been glad if Udayana, the King of Vatsa, were to be your lord. There is no other king in this world to match him in handsomeness, lineage, heroism and riches. If you become his wife, then the effort of the Creator in endowing you with such loveliness will be fruitful."

On hearing the words of Somaprabhā, Kaliṅgasenā's mind was fixed on the King of Vatsa. Then she asked the daughter of Maya, " Friend, tell me how the King of Vatsa looks ; to what race he belongs, and how he obtained the name Udayana." Then Somaprabhā narrated to her the story of the King of Vatsa as follows:

5. STORY OF UDAYANA

There is a famous country called Vatsa. Its capital, Kauśāmbī, vies with Amarāvataī, the capital of Gods. The King who rules the country from his capital is called the King of Vatsa. As to his race, I presume you know Abhimanyu, the son of Arjuna, one of the Pāṇḍavas. He was killed in the war by the Kauravas and his son Parīkṣit was killed by a snake. His son was Janamejaya, who performed a long Serpent Sacrifice. His son was Śatānīka, who ruled at Kauśāmbī. He was slain in the war between the Gods and the Demons after he had destroyed many Demons. His son was Sahasrānīka who acquired great fame in the world. He used to visit heaven often, by means of the chariot sent by Indra. His queen was Mṛgāvatī and Udayana was born to her as an ornament to the lunar race and as a delight to their subjects. He got his name of Udayana in the following manner. His mother,

Queen Mṛgāvatī, when she was pregnant, developed a desire to bathe in a pool of blood. Afraid of the sin of shedding so much blood, her husband made her bathe in a large tank of red water coloured with lac. A vulture swooped down and carried her away, mistaking her to be a piece of flesh, but fortunately left her alive on the Udaya Mountain. There she was consoled by Sage Jamadagni who foretold that she would be re-united with her husband. She stayed there for some time as a result of a curse which had been pronounced on her husband by Tilottamā. After a few days she gave birth to a son on the Udaya Mountain in the hermitage of Jamadagni. At his birth an aerial voice spoke as follows: " Here is the great Emperor Udayana born. His son will be the king of all the Vidyādharas." In this manner he was named Udayana by the Gods as he was born on the Udaya Mountain. Informed by Mātali, Sahasrānīka spent his time with difficulty without Mṛgāvatī, expecting the end of the curse. At the termination of the curse, he got his signet ring providentially from a Śabara who came from the Udaya Mounthin, and getting the information from a heavenly voice, he started for the Udaya Mountain led by the Śabara. There he found his queen, Mṛgāvatī, and his son, Udayana. Returning to Kauśāmbī, he installed his son as the Crown Prince, and appointed Yaugandharāyaṇa and other sons of his ministers as his councillors. In this manner, relieved of the burden of government, he enjoyed for a long time the pleasures of life along with his queen. Then he installed his son as king and left the kingdom for good at a ripe old age in the company of his wife and ministers. Thus Udayana obtained his paternal kingdom and, having conquered the whole world by his prowess, is governing it with Yaugandharāyaṇa as his friend and adviser.

In this manner Somaprabhā briefly related the story of Udayana and further said to her in secret, " So he is called King of Vatsa because he rules over the Vatsa country. He belongs to the lunar race as

he is a descendent of the Pāṇḍavas. He is named Udayana by the gods as he was born on the Udaya Mountain. In beauty of form even the God of Love is not equal to him. He alone is fit to be your husband as you are the loveliest in the three worlds. Attracted by your loveliness, he desires to marry you. But he has a senior queen called Vāsavadattā, who is the daughter of Caṇḍa Mahāsena. She excels Uṣā and Śakuntalā in beauty and she, putting aside her modesty, chose him as her husband in utter disregard of her relatives. She bore a son to Udayana, who was named Naravāhanadatta and who was ordained by the gods to be the future king of the Vidyādharas. So Udayna is afraid to hurt her feelings and does not ask your hand in marriage. I have seen her and she cannot vie with you in loveliness."

On hearing the words of Somaprabhā, Kaliṅgasenā's heart was fixed on the King of Vatsa and she said to her friend, "I know it, friend, but what can I do, being completely under the control of my parents ? There is no other refuge for me except you, who are wise and resourceful."

Somaprabhā replied, "What can I do in a matter which is entirely in the hands of Providence ? If Providence is favourable, it can prevent unfavourable occurrences and bring about favourable ones in their place. I shall relate to you a story in support of my statement."

6. STORY OF TEJASVATĪ

In days of yore, there was a king in Ujjayanī called Vikramasena. He had a daughter of unparalleled beauty called Tejasvatī. The king could not find a prince fit to be her husband. One day she saw from her palace a young man passing in the street. She conceived a liking for the handsome man. She wanted her maid-servant to inform him of the same. The maid went to him and made him reluctantly consent to the bold step and fixed a deserted temple as the rendezvous for their meeting and asked him to wait there in the night expecting the princess. She reported the news to the princess who eagerly waited for the approach of the night. The young man who promised to wait there for the princess was seized with fear and broke the appointment. Meanwhile, a young and handsome prince of a noble race, whose father was dead and who was deprived of his kingdom by his kinsmen, was coming to Ujjayanī to see his father's friend, Vikramasena. He was called Somadatta. By nightfall he came near the same deserted temple. As he was travelling alone, he thought of spending the night in the temple and seeing the king the next morning. As already fixed, the princess repaired to the temple in the night and told him that she had chosen him as her husband. He too consented to marry her, as he thought she had been sent to him by Providence as an indication of his future prosperity. The princess too, when she came to know who he was, thought that Providence had acted most favourably to her by joining her with a handsome prince. After spending some time in conversation, the princess returned to her palace and the prince spent the night in the temple. The next morning the prince went to the palace and got himself announced by the doorkeeper. He was recognised by the king and admitted to his presence. He related his sad story to the king who promised to help him in regaining his kingdom from his enemies. The king thought that the prince would prove a suitable husband for his daughter and desired to bestow her on him, and informed his ministers of his intention. Then the queen informed the king of the secret marriage of her daughter as it had been related to her by

the maid-servant. The king was astonished at the working of Providence in preventing what was undesirable and accomplishing what was desirable and good. The ministers congratulated the king on his daughter, Tejasvatī, choosing, by the intervention of Providence, the right person instead of the unworthy person she had desired to wed. King Vikramasena then celebrated the marriage of his daughter with Somadatta with great pomp. Somadatta, with the help of the forces of his father-in-law, recovered his kingdom and lived happily with his wife.

At the conclusion of the story, Somaprabhā said, " So you see, my friend Kaliṅgasenā, Providence brings about everything. How can anybody unite you with the King of Vatsa without the help of Providence ? I am at a loss to know how I can help you." She then left Kaliṅgasenā for the night and went to her heavenly home.

The next day when Somaprabhā came to see Kaliṅgasenā, the latter told her, " My father is determined to give me in marriage to Prasenajit. My mother told me so. You have seen the aged Prasenajit, and you told me that the King of Vatsa is unrivalled in beauty. On hearing your account of the king, my mind was fixed on him. So please show me Prasenajit first and then take me to where the King of Vatsa resides. I do not mind my father or my mother."

Somaprabhā heard these anxious words of Kaliṅgasenā and said, " If you are determined to go, I shall take you by a machine which flies in the air. You should take all your goods and chattels with you, for you will not be able to come here after seeing the

King of Vatsa. You will neither see your parents, nor think of them. When once you are with your lover, you will forget me also who am far away. I cannot approach you like this in your husband's house."

The princess began to shed tears and said, "Then please, my friend, bring the King of Vatsa here. I cannot stay there even for a moment without you. Don't say that you cannot bring him. Did not Citralekhā bring Aniruddha to Uṣā by her tactics? You are far cleverer than Citralekhā. I shall relate to you how Uṣā did it.

7. STORY OF UṢĀ

The renowned Uṣā was the daughter of the Asura called Bāṇa. She worshipped Gaurī for obtaining a suitable husband. The Goddess promised her that she would marry the person who would appear to her in a dream. One day, soon after this, she dreamt of a youth of god-like beauty. She was married to him in the dream, after the Gāndharva style. But when she woke up she did not find him though she had signs of having enjoyed his company in the night. She then recollected the promise of Gaurī and became anxious to find him. Questioned as to the cause of her anxiety, she related to her confidante, Citralekhā, the incidents of the night. Citralekhā had superhuman powers, but what could she do without knowing the name or other marks of identification of the prson? She said to Uṣā, "Friend, it is the result of the promise of the Goddess. What else can it be? But how can I discover your lover without any marks of identification? If you noted him well, I shall draw a picture of the world with all the gods, demons and men in it and you point him out in the picture. Then I shall go and get him here." On her agreeing to do so, Citralekhā drew a picture of the world and then Uṣā pointed out Aniruddha of the Yadu family in Dvārakā as the

person who had appeared to her in her dream. Citralekhā said, " Dear friend, you are fortunate; because you got as your husband Aniruddha, the grandson of Śrīkṛṣṇa. He lives at a distance of sixty yojanas from here." Uṣā became still more eager at her words and said, " If I cannot meet him today, it will not be possible for me to live." Citralekhā consoled her friend and immediately flew to the city of Dvārakā which, with its massive and lofty mansions in the middle of the sea, presented the semblance of the peaks of Manthara Mountain in the sea. She approached the sleeping Aniruddha at night, awakened him and represented to him the love of Uṣā towards him. He too exhibited knowledge of the dream and showed anxiety to meet her assuming the same form. By her magical powers she immediately took him from there and brought him into the apartments of Uṣā who was anxiously awaiting her arrival. When she saw Aniruddha in person before her, Uṣā was elated with joy like the sea at the sight of the moon. She did not spend many happy days with him before her father, Bāṇa, came to know of it and grew angry. But Aniruddha made an end of him with his own prowess, augmented by the power of his grandfather. Then he took Uṣā to Dvārakā and they lived there happily together many a year like Pārvatī and Parameśvara.

Somaprabhā replied, " Citralekhā was an Asura maid. She could touch and carry a stranger. How can we who shun the touch of strangers do so ? So I can only take you to where the King of Vatsa resides. On the way I shall show you Prasenajit as desired by you." Kaliṅgasenā agreed, and taking her money, ornaments and dress and other necessary things with her, started with Somaprabhā on the magic aerial car without the knowledge of her parents. She came to Śrāvastī first and there saw the aged king Prasenajit who was on a hunting expedition. Somaprabhā pointed to him and said to Kaliṅgasenā jocularly, " Look,

look, my friend, this is King Prasenajit on whom your father wishes to bestow you in marriage !" Kaliṅgasenā replied, "This king is wedded to old age ; who else can approach him for marriage ? Enough of him ! Please take me quickly to the King of Vatsa."

Then they both went to the city of Kauśāmbī by the same aerial car. There Kaliṅgasenā saw the King of Vatsa in a garden from a distance as pointed out by her friend and was filled with joy. She said to Somaprabhā, "Friend, I am not master of myself from the time I saw him. I cannot tolerate the delay of even a moment. Please introduce me at once to him."

Somaprabhā said, "I have noticed some bad omen now. It is not therefore advisable to meet him at once. Please wait for a day in this garden without being noticed by anybody ; and do not stray far in this garden. I shall come in the morning and devise some means by which you can both meet each other. I shall bid good-bye to you for the present."

Taking leave of her friend, Somaprabhā went to her home and the King of Vatsa returned to his palace.

Unable to bear the pangs of separation any longer, Kaliṅgasenā sent, contrary to the advice of her friend, her chamberlain to the King of Vatsa with a suitable message explaining the object of her visit. He went to the King of Vatsa, got himself announced by the

doorkeeper and was immediately admitted to the king's presence. He said to the king, "O King, Kaliṅgasenā, the dautghter of Kaliṅgadatta, King of Takṣaśilā, learnt of your unrivalled beauty and came here, leaving her relatives, to choose you as her husband. She was brought here by means of a magic car which can fly along with her retinue, by a dear friend of her, named Somaprabhā, who is the daughter of the Asura Maya and spouse of Nalakūbara, and who can move about unseen by others. I was sent by her to inform you of her intention. Please accept her as your wife and may your union be like that of the moon and the moonlight."

The king was pleased to hear the message and agreed to the choice and honoured him with presents of clothes and ornaments. He sent for his Chief Minister, Yaugandharāyaṇa, and said to him, "The daughter of Kaliṅgadatta, Kaliṅgasenā, who is famous for her unrivalled beauty, has come here, choosing me as her husband. I cannot reject her. Tell me quickly when I can marry her."

Yaugandharāyaṇa, who was always the well-wisher of the king, went into deep thought for a moment. "Kaliṅgasenā is well-known everywhere for her beauty," he thought. "There is none else to match her in loveliness and so even the gods desire to marry her. If he obtains her, our King of Vatsa will neglect everybody else. Queen Vāsavadattā may then end her life. The young Prince Naravāhanadatta may

perish for want of his mother. Out of love for both, it may be difficult for Queen Padmāvatī to continue to live. The fathers of the Queens, Caṇḍa Mahāsena and Pradyota may then end their lives or may become mentally unsound. In this manner, I am afraid, total destruction may result from the union. On the other hand, it is not also advisable to dissuade the king ; for passions become stronger when prevented. So I shall delay the matter to prevent its fulfilment." Having thus decided, he said to the king, "Your Majesty is indeed to be congratulated as Kaliṅgasenā has chosen you as her lord ; and her father has, consequently, become, as it were, your slave. Your Majesty had better consult the astrologers and marry her at an auspicious time as she is the daughter of a mighty king. Until then, let her be given a suitable residence to live in and sufficient retinue to serve her, and befitting costumes and ornaments to wear."

The king agreed to the suggestions of Yaugandharāyaṇa and ordered everything accordingly. Kaliṅgasenā took up the residence assigned to her and was extremely pleased that her desire should be fulfilled soon. Yaugandharāyaṇa hurried to his house and thought as follows: "Delay is generally the remedy for actions resulting in evil. It was in this manner that Śacī was saved from an awkward situation by the priest of the gods. She prayed to him for succour when she was pressed by Nahuṣa who acted as the king of gods, Indra having abdicated the throne on account of the sin of killing the Brāhmaṇa, Vṛtra. Saying

that Śacī would go to him the next day, he gained time ; in the meanwhile Nahuṣa perished by the curse of a Ṛṣi. Indra again assumed the reins of government after returning from his penane. In the same way I shall delay my king's union with Kaliṅgasenā."

For this purpose he convened a meeting of all the astrologers in the city and obtained their common consent to fix a distant date.

Coming to know of Kaliṅgasenā's affair, Queen Vāsavadattā sent for the minister Yaugandharāyaṇa who immediately went and offered his respects to her. " Do you remember, Chief Minister," she said to him in tears, " your promise to me, that while you are alive, there will be no rival to me to the king's affection except Padmāvatī. See, arrangements are now being made for the marriage of Kaliṅgasenā with the king. You know that she is very lovely and my lord, the king, loves her dearly. So you are going to turn a liar now and I am going to die."

" Be composed, Your Majesty," replied Yaugandharāyaṇa. " How can this happen while I am breathing ? You should do nothing to cause him displeasure ; on the contrary, assuming courage, Your Majesty should act as if you are favourable to the proposal. A patient will not be obedient to the doctor if the latter speaks contrary to his wishes ; but he will become obedient if the doctor speaks agreeably and pleasently to him. In any enterprise or passion, one who acts directly against it will never succeed ; but one who

acts in the same direction may succeed. So when His Majesty approaches you, you should serve him as usual with willingness, suppressing all outward expressions of displeasure. You must make him believe that you approve of his acceptance of Kaliṅgasenā, saying that it will contribute to the enlargement of the kingdom through the help of her father. If you act in this manner, his love and kindness to you will increase all the more on seeing your nobility. He will not be anxious thinking that Kaliṅgasenā is easy of attainment for him. You should also instruct Padmāvatī to conduct herself likewise. If you do so, the king will willingly suffer delay in the matter. I shall manage the rest of the business. Then you will know my tactics. Wisdom and heroism are put to test only in extreme difficulties. Your Majesty has no cause to be dejected."

But the King of Vatsa did not visit either of his queens that day. The night was passed by queen Vāsavadattā, the King, his Chief Minister and Kaliṅgasenā in feigned delight, impatience, deep thought and festivity respectivly.

The next morning Yaugandharāyaṇa approached the king who was expecting him and asked him why an auspicious day had not yet been fixed for his marriage with Kaliṅgasenā. "I am very anxious to be united with her as early as possible," said the king and commanded a servant to summon all the astrologers. He asked them to fix an auspicious day for his marriage

and they told him, according to instructions already given to them, that such a day could be found only after the lapse of six months. On hearing their opinion Yaugandharāyaṇa pretended to be angry with them. "They are fools, Your Majesty," he said. "There is another astrologer whom Your Majesty used to praise as intelligent. He has not come today. Your Majesty may consult him and act according to his advice." The agitated king immediately sent for him and asked him to select a suitable day. He too had been secretly instructed by the minister. He thought for a moment and declared that no auspicious day existed during the next six months, and fixed a day after that period. Yaugandharāyaṇa then pretended to be dejected and asked the king to command him what he should do. Though uneasy at heart, the king was in favour of an auspicious day for the marriage. "Ask Kaliṅgasenā what she thinks about it," said the king after a moment's reflection to the minister, "We shall be guided by her opinion." Accompanied by two astrologers, Yaugandharāyaṇa went to Kaliṅgasenā. He was duly welcomed by her but on seeing her face to face he was seized with the idea that the king, on obtaining her, would neglect the affairs of the state through passion. "I have come here, with astrologers, to fix a suitable day for your marriage," said the minister. "Therefore, madam, let us know your birth asterism." She instructed her handmaids to communicate her asterism to them. The astrologers pretended to make some

calculations and finally said that the same day after six months was the earliest suitable day. The mandate of the minister was peremptory. Kaliṅgasenā also became uneasy at the remoteness of the date but her chamberlain said, " Be it proximate or remote, an auspicious day has to be fixed for the perpetual happiness of the couple." Everybody present there concurred with the opinion of the chamberlain. " Ah, if the marriage is performed on an inauspicious day," put in Minister Yaugandharāyaṇa, " our relative, King Kaliṅgadatta will be distressed." Then the helpless Kaliṅgasenā said, " As it pleases you all," and kept quiet. Yaugandharāyaṇa then took leave of her and approached the king accompanied by the astrologers. He conveyed to the king the approval of Kaliṅgasenā for the remote date and went home, having pacified the king with consoling words.

Having thus postponed the marriage for the time being and gained time for further action, Yaugandharāyaṇa remembered his demon friend Yogeśvara. The demon appeared before the minister as previously agreed, bowed to him and asked him why he had thought of him. The minister then apprised him of the incident of Kaliṅgasenā which caused uneasiness to the king, and said, " O friend, I have gained time in this manner. In the meantime, you must use your tactics and watch the conduct of Kaliṅgasenā, without appearing to her. As she is of singular beauty in the world, even Vidyādharas and other heavenly beings certainly desire her in secret. She may be attached to

some Siddha or Vidyādhara. If you can discover it, it will be of advantage to us. The divine lovers may put on different forms, but they assume their own form while asleep. If you can discover some blemish in her character, the king will become averse to her and so our mission will succeed."

"Suppose I myself corrupt or kill her by my skill ?" said the demon on hearing the words of the minister.

"You should do nothing of the kind. It will be a crime," said the minister. "He, who proceeds in his own way without swerving from virtue will be helped by virtue itself in attaining his object. So, friend, be on the watch for any blemish in her character brought about by herself. If you do so, then with your help I can accomplish something good for the king."

The demon then went to the palace of Kaliṅgasenā and began to watch her, having become invisible to all by his magical powers. When Somaprabhā the daughter of Maya and the friend of Kaliṅgasenā returned to her, she learnt what had happened in the night and said to the princess within hearing of the demon, "I came here in the forenoon itself in search of you but finding Yaugandharāyaṇa with you, I remained invisible by your side. I heard and understood the conversation between you both. Why did you commence the negotiations yesterday though prohibited by me ? My friend, if you undertake any work in disregard of

ill-omens, it will result in evil to us. You have not done well in sending a messenger to the King of Vatsa yesterday to accept you when you had an ill-omen. May your good fortune bring about your marriage without an impediment ! I am afraid your marriage will be delayed as you came from your house at an unfavourable hour. Even the divine beings covet you. You have to guard yourself against evils. You should beware of the arch-politician, Minister Yaugandharāyaṇa. If he suspects harm to the king, he may create impediments. Even if your marriage is accomplished, he may spread scandal about you. Being virtuous, even if he does not do so, you have to beware of your co-wives. They will vilify you and spoil your career. You have now to protect yourself since you proposed marriage to him of your own accord. I am sorry, my friend, that I can no longer come to you since you are in your husband's house. Ladies do not as a rule go to the houses of the husbands of their friends, and I am already prohibited by my husband. Though I am very much attached to you, I cannot come to you in secret, since my husband will surely come to know of it by his divine powers. I have now come here with his permission to bid you good-bye. I have no more business here and I shall go home."

Kaliṅgasenā began to shed tears at the departure of her friend. Somaprabhā consoled her and went home through the air. When her friend had left her, Kaliṅgasenā felt herself in Kauśāmbī like a fish out of water, having left her relatives and her native place

and having her marriage with the King of Vatsa postponed for a long time.

The King of Vatsa was troubled at heart on that day at the decision of the astrologers to delay his marriage with the princess and to divert his mind he went to the residence of Queen Vāsavadattā. She on her part, appreaed to be quite happy, welcomed him and attended on him with great affection. The king was astonished at her conduct and wondered how she could be so composed after the Kaliṅgasenā affair had already become widely known.

" Did you hear, my dear," he asked her, wishing to know her mind, " that a princess, Kaliṅgasenā by name, has come here to marry me by her own choice?"

" I do," replied the queen without the slightest change in the colour of her face. " I am very glad of it. She is really the Goddess of Wealth that has come to us ! While her father, King Kaliṅgadatta comes within your power through her, the whole world will be under your control. It is well known to you, my lord, that I always welcome prosperity to you and I shall be happy when you are happy. Am I not fortunate that my husband is desired by a princess who is coveted by other princes ?"

The king was very pleased at the words of the queen and spent the night happily with her. When he woke up, he fell into deep meditation. " How magnanimous is my queen in understanding my mind

and accepting Kaliṅgasenā as her co-wife ! How can the poor queen who, fortunately for me, was prevented from giving up her life at the time of my marriage with Princess Padmāvatī, bear this ? Should this be disagreeable to her, then wholesale destruction would follow, as my son, my parents-in-law, Queen Padmāvatī and my kingdom itself are dependent on her, not to speak of other things. Under these conditions, how can I espouse Kaliṅgasenā ?"

The king left Vāsavadattā's palace in the morning and attended to the duties of state during the day and went to Padmāvatī's residence in the evening. She too attended on the king without any demur and being questioned by the king, answered in the same manner as the senior queen had done.

A few days later in the course of conversation the king reported the conduct and the words of the two queens to Minister Yaugandharāyaṇa. The minister observed that the king had fallen into a dilemma and thought that the proper time had come to put in his words.

" I am unaware of this," he began slowly. " The decision seems to be terrible; for the queens must have spoken to you in that manner having made up their minds to put an end to their lives. When their husbands are attached to others or have left this world, virtuous women, being indifferent to everything else and determined to put an end to their lives, spurn dejection and become bold. It will be intolerable to women to

find their deep affections crossed. I will relate to you a similar story which happened before."

8. STORY OF VIDYUDDYOTĀ

There is a city called Gokarṇa in the south. A wise king of noble family, called Śrutasena, was ruling in it. He was prosperous in every way but had only one anxiety: he could not secure a queen suitable to him. He conveyed his anxiety one day to a Brāhmaṇa friend of his, named Agniśarman.

> "O King," he began, "while going round the holy places in this land, I one day reached the city of King Vasantasena, on the sea-shore. I entered a Chatram to have my food. There some other Brāhmaṇas warned me not to go by a certain path as, they said, it led to the quarters of the princess. She was called Vidyuddyotā and she was so lovely, that even saints, if they saw her, would be stricken with love, become mad and die for her. Then I told them that I was not afraid, because every day I used to see Śrutasena who was as handsome as the god of love and at whose festive processions family women were driven away by servants for fear that they would fall in love with him. Then the manager of the Chatram and the king's family priest took me to the presence of the king. There I saw the princess, Vidyuddyotā, who appeared to me like Cupid's charm in bodily form made to madden people. Then I thought that she would be a suitable queen to you, my master."

The king became enamoured of her at his story and immediately sent the same Brāhmaṇa as his messenger to request her hand in marriage and by suitable negotiations made her his queen. They became deeply attached to each other and became inseparable like the sun and his lustre.

After a time, a maiden by name Mātṛdattā, the daughter of a rich merchant, who was proud of her beauty, came to marry the king by her own choice. Afraid of rejecting a maiden who had

come by her own choice to marry him, the king accepted her as his wife. When Vidyuddyotā heard of this, she died of a broken heart. Hearing of the death of his queen, the king came to see her, took her into his lap and gave up his life out of sorrow for her. Then the daughter of the merchant, Mātṛdattā, consigned her body to the flames and made an end of herself. In this manner the whole family was lost and the kingdom was ruined.

"So I say, Your Majesty," continued Yaugandharāyaṇa, "it would be intolerable if deep affections are crossed. It will be more so in the case of Queen Vāsavadattā who is highminded. So if Your Majesty marries Kaliṅgasenā, then you may be sure that Queen Vāsavadattā will be no more. So too will be Queen Padmāvatī, because though their bodies are different, they are one in life. Then you may yourself imagine what will be the fate of Prince Naravāhanadatta. I know Your Majesty's heart will not be able to bear all this. So the whole family will perish in an instant. The bold words of the queens themselves reveal that their hearts have become indifferent on account of their strong determination to put an end to their lives. Your Majesty should protect your interests; why should you not, when even birds and animals are protecting theirs?"

Hearing the words of Yaugandharāyaṇa, the king's mind became clear. "Certainly, as you say, Minister, there will be wholesale destruction," said the king. "Nothing will be gained by my marrying Kaliṅgasenā. I am glad that the astrologers fixed a distant date. What harm is there if I reject a maiden who has come to marry me of her own accord?"

Yaugandharāyaṇa was pleased at the words of the king, and taking leave of him went home, glad at the success of his plan. The king on his part went to Queen Vāsavadattā who again received and attended on him with pretended pleasure. "You yourself know, my dear," said he consoling her, "why I say your love infuses life into me like water into the lotus. Did I ever venture to mention even the name of another woman ? Kaliṅgasenā all of a sudden came to my palace. It is well-known that Rambhā, who likewise came to him all of a sudden, cursed Arjuna to become a eunuch when he rejected her, being engaged in penance. He, however, passed the period of curse in female form while he resided for a year in the court of King Virāṭa. So I could not then reject Kaliṅgasenā. I do not venture to say anything without your concurrence." Having conciliated her in this manner, the king spent the night happily in her company.

Now the demon-friend of Yaugandhrāyaṇa, called Yogeśvara, whom the minister employed day and night to secure news of Kaliṅgasenā, came to him that night. "I was carefully watching inside and outside the house of Kaliṅgasenā," he said to the minister, but I could not discover the approach of either men or gods to her. Today, however, I suddenly heard an indistinct sound in the sky, early in the morning, near the top of the palace. I was not able to know the source of the sound although I employed my magical powers. Then I thought that as my magic did not work it must be the sound of some divine person

who was moving in the air attracted by the loveliness of Kaliṅgasenā; and that I must wait till I found some flaw in her character, which would not be difficult to find if I could watch with care and ability. I concluded that it must be some divine person, because Your Excellency told me that she was coveted even by divine personages and I also heard Somaprabhā, her friend, remarking in the same manner. I have come now to report the matter to you."

"My dear friend," said the minister, "use your intelligence and find out some flaw in the conduct of Kaliṅgasenā; for in matters like these intelligence has to be used and not valour. She is doubtless desired by divine personages and the sound that you heard in the night in the sky must have been made by one such. If you can discover flaw in her character, then it will be favourable to us, for the king will not then marry her and we shall not be guilty of any sin."

The demon was immensely pleased with the noble words of the minister. "Who can equal you in policy," he complimented the minister, "except the divine teacher, Bṛhaspati? I shall be watching the conduct of Kaliṅgasenā with all my intelligence and ability."

With these words he took leave of the minister and went to the residence of Kaliṅgasenā. At that time she was uneasy in her mind, having seen from her palace the King of Vatsa now and then moving about in his palace. With her mind fixed on him, she was suffering the severe pangs of love and could get no

relief even from the application of cool lotus stalks and sandal paste.

In the meantime, the Vidyādhara prince, named Madanavega, who had seen Kaliṅgasenā before and fallen in love with her and who performed penance to obtain her and got a boon from Śiva, was always intent upon getting her but could not do so as she was fond of another and had changed her residence. He was watching for an opportunity to meet her and was moving in the nights over her palace unseen by others. Recollecting the boon of Śiva whom he propitiated, he, that night, by the power of his magic, assumed the form of the King of Vatsa and entered her palace. The doorkeeper saluted him and allowed him to pass, thinking that the king, unable to bear further delay, had come to Kaliṅgasenā without anybody's knowledge. Seeing him, Kaliṅgasenā stood up, agitated and shaking. He gradually won her confidence in Vatsa's form and married her in the Gāndharva style.

The demon, Yogeśvara, who entered the palace unseen by others at that time, was distressed at what he saw, thinking that it was the real King of Vatsa. He immediately ran to Yaugandharāyaṇa and reported what he had seen. Directred by him, Yogeśvara went to Queen Vāsavadattā's palace and found the King of Vatsa by her side. He was pleased at it and returned to the palace of Kaliṅgasenā to observe, as advised by the minister, the appearance of her lover while asleep. When the lovers were asleep, he entered

the bed-chamber and found Madanavega in his own form. Madanavega appeared in his divine body with the marks of an umbrella and a banner on his foot, unstained by dust and free from change in form brought about by his magical power which disappeared during sleep. Yogeśvara ran in glee to Yaugandharāyaṇa and reported to him what he had witnessed in the room.

"People like us do not understand anything," he said to Yaugandharāyaṇa with joy, "but you can see into everything with your politic eye. This difficult task of the king has been accomplished by your wisdom. As is the sky without the sun, as is the lake without water, as is speech without truth, so is the kingdom without statesmanship."

Yaugandharāyaṇa was pleased with him and sent him home.

The next morning, the minister, as he was wont to do, went to see the king. The king enquired of him about the arrangements made for Kaliṅgasenā. In the course of his reply the minister said, "She is a free woman, and not fit for Your Majesty to marry. She came of her own accord to see Prasenajit. Rejecting him as being too old, she came to you, attracted by your beauty. She freely associates herself with any person."

"She is a high-born girl; how can she act so?" said the king in reply. "Further, who has the ability to enter the women's apartments of my palace?"

" I shall show you tonight and you can see it with your own eyes," said Yaugandharāyaṇa. " Divine personages like Siddhas and others desire to have her ; what of men ? Who can prevent the progress of the divinities ? Come and see it with your own eyes." The king decided to accompany the minister that night to witness what he had described.

The minister then went to see Queen Vāsavadattā. "I have now fulfilled my promise to you, Your Majesty," he said to her, with proud joy, " that the king will not marry any other princess except Queen Padmāvatī." He then narrated to her the whole story of Kaliṅgasenā. Queen Vāsavadattā saluted him and said in reply, " I am enjoying the fruit of implicitly following your advice."

Then at dead of night, when all were plunged in sleep, the King of Vatsa went to the residence of Kaliṅgasenā, accompanied by Yaugandharāyaṇa. In invisible form the king entered the bedroom of Kaliṅgsaenā and saw Madanavega sleeping in his own form by her side. When the king was about to kill Madanavega, he woke up and flew into the air. Immediately, Kaliṅgasenā also awoke and observing her couch to be vacant cried, " How is it that the King of Vatsa woke up first and left me sleeping ?"

" This poor girl was seduced by him assuming your form," said Yaugandharāyaṇa to the king on hearing her cry. " I came to know of it by my magical

powers and showed it to you ; but being divine by nature, he cannot be killed by you." Saying so, he went to her presence along with the king. Seeing them both Kaliṅgasenā stood up with respect.

"Where did you go just now, O King," she asked him with astonishment, "and how did you return with the minister ?"

"O Kaliṅgasenā, you have been deceived by someone in the form of the King of Vatsa," said Yaugandharāyaṇa in reply, "and married to him. You are not married to my master."

Kaliṅgasenā was perplexed at the words of the minister, and addressed the King of Vatsa with tears in her eyes. "O King, have you forgotten that you married me in the Gāndharva style, as Duṣyanta married Śakuntalā ?"

The king angrily protested and affirmed that this was the first time he was entering her chamber. Then, at the suggestion of the minister, he returned to his palace.

At the departure of the king and his minister, Kaliṅgasenā felt her condition to be helpless. She had left her relatives and come to a strange place and so was like a deer strayed from the herd. She was deprived of her maidenhood but could find no way to come out with honour. She fixed her eyes at the sky and cried aloud, "I have been married by someone who

has taken the form of King of Vatsa. Let the youth appear before me. He is my true husband."

On hearing her words, the Vidyādhara prince, in his divine form, decked with necklaces and bracelets, descended from the sky.

"Who may you be, Sir ?" she asked him.

"I am a Vidyādhara prince, named Madanavega," he replied. "I saw you before in your paternal home and fell in love with you. I performed penance to obtain you and was granted a boon by Śiva. You were desirous of marrying King Vatsa. So I had to use my tactics and marry you quickly assuming his form before you could marry him."

Kaliṅgasenā was pleased at heart when she heard his words conveying his constancy to her. He created confidence in her and she was satisfied that he deserved her. He took leave of her and flew to his abode promising to return again. Kaliṅgasenā decided to stay in the same palace, as, being a mortal, she could not go to the divine residence of her husband, and she had voluntarily left her father's house. Madanavega approved of her intention.

Sometime after, when once the King of Vatsa paid a visit to her, Kaliṅgasenā told him that she had accepted Madanavega as her husband although he married her in the disguise of the King of Vatsa and reconciled herself to the lot ordained by fate. She

said, she had given up the thought of marrying the king and that she would continue to reside in that house if the king permitted her, otherwise she would seek another residence. The King of Vatsa praised her for her resolve and told her that she might reside in the house along with her husband and that he had no mind to disturb her. So Kaliṅgasenā lived happily in the same palace and her husband Madanavega paid her frequent visits from his divine home. Yaugandharāyaṇa was contented that his policy had been successful and Queen Vāsavadattā was pleased that there were no more queens to share the king's love with her.

In course of time, Kaliṅgasenā became pregnant. Her complexion became pale and her gait became tedious. On observing this, her husband, Madanavega said to her, " My dear Kaliṅgasenā, convention for divine persons is like this. If a human child is born to one of us, we leave it and go away. Did not Menakā abandon Śakuntalā in Kaṇva's hermitage ? Although you were an Apsaras before, you became mortal by the curse of Indra, pronounced through your own misbehaviour. So, though you were chaste, you got into disrepute. Protect your child ; I shall return to my own place. But I shall be by your side whenever you think of me." Kaliṅgasenā began to weep when she heard his words ; but Madanavega consoled her and, having presented her many gems and jewels, left her very reluctantly. Kaliṅgasenā stayed there supported by the hope of begetting a child and protected by the fraternal care of the King of Vatsa.

Meanwhile Rati, the wife of Manmatha, performed penance to Śiva to obtain by his grace her husband in bodily form. Śiva appeared to her and said, " Your husband, who was burnt to ashes by me for his misconduct towards me, has been born as a mortal, Naravāhanadatta by name, in the house of the King of Vatsa. Because you have worshipped me, you will be born, though immortal, as a mortal and will be united with your husband in human form."

Having satisfied her in this manner, Śiva said to Brahman, " Kaliṅgasenā will bring forth a son of divine origin. Remove that child by magic and in its place put Rati, removing her immortal form and making a human child of her."

At the proper time, Kaliṅgasenā gave birth to a son. Immediately Brahman appeared on the scene and by means of his divine power removed the male child and without knowledge of anybody substituted it by Rati turned into the form of a lovely female child. Everybody, therefore, thought that only a female child was born. The child by her lustre lighted the lying-in-chamber and made the light appear pale in its presence. When Kaliṅgasenā looked at the child of unparalleled beauty, she became more glad than at the birth of a son, and ordered the celebration of its birth with great pomp.

Now the King of Vatsa, as well as the minister and the queen, came to know that a child of extra-

ordinary beauty was born to Kaliṅgasenā. As if prompted by an immortal agency, the king immediately said to Queen Vāsavadattā in the presence of the minister, "I know that Kaliṅgasenā was a divine maiden fallen by a curse. The child of uncommon beauty born to her must of course be divine. The child, by virtue of its beauty, is a match for my son. She deserves to be the chief queen of Naravāhanadatta."

"What made you say so now suddenly, my dear ?" said Queen Vāsavadattā to him. "Where is the similarity between our son born of two pure families and the daughter of Kaliṅgasenā born of a common woman ?"

"I am not saying so of my own accord," said the king after considering for a short while, "somebody within me seems to tell me so. Methinks I am hearing a divine voice saying to me, 'This girl is the predestined wife of Naravāhanadatta.' Kaliṅgasenā is a chaste woman born of a good family. She is styled a common woman by the force of her previous acts."

"It is reported, Your Majesty," said the Minister Yaugandharāyaṇa, "that when Rati performed penance, on the death of her lord, to regain him, Śiva granted her the boon that, having attained human form she would be united with her husband who would descend to this earth in human form. Your son has been declared to be an incarnation of Kāma by a divine voice formerly. By the decree of Śiva, Rati has to come down to this earth in human form. The

midwife told me in secret that she saw the child of Kaliṅgasenā undergoing a change soon after its birth. She quickly came to report the astonishing news to me. On hearing the news from the woman, it struck me that the gods had stolen the child of Kaliṅgasenā and substituted the immortal Rati to be the wife of your son who is an incarnation of Kāma. It is well known that in this way divine personages descend into this world for some reason or other. Why should you enquire into her race ? The daughter of Kaliṅgasenā is decreed by the gods to be the wife of your son."

On hearing the words of Yaugandharāyaṇa, Queen Vāsavadattā reconciled herself to the king's proposal. Then Yaugandharāyaṇa took leave of them and the king and the queen spent the day in the happy company of each other.

In course of time, the child of Kaliṅgasenā, forgetting her identity, grew into a lovely girl. As she was the daughter of Madanavega, she was given the name of Madanamañcukā by her mother. All the other girls appeared ugly before her, as if all their beauty had been accumulated in her. Hearing of her extraordinary beauty, Queen Vāsavadattā became curious and caused the child to be brought to her one day. Not only the queen, but the king, the minister and others also saw the child. They all declared her to be of uncommon beauty and lovely appearance and indeed an incarnation of Rati. The queen then ordered her son, Naravāhanadatta, also to be

brought there. Naravāhanadatta was delighted at her sight like the lotus at the appearance of the sun ; and Madanamañcukā was pleased at his sight like the Cakora at the sight of the moon. They developed such an attachment to each other that they could not be separated even for a moment. In a few days, the king was convinced that they were destined to be united and made up his mind to marry them. Kaliṅgasenā was immensely pleased when she came to know of the king's decision and lavished her love on Naravāhanadatta as on a son-in-law. In consultation with his ministers, the king caused a palace like his own to be built separately for his son.

On an auspicious day, when all the planets were favourably situated, the king anointed Naravāhanadatta as the crown-prince. He was bathed in water sanctified by the chanting of the Mantras ; but even before that he was bathed in the tears of joy shed by the king. His face was washed clean by the holy waters. His mother threw flowers over his head ; immediately flowers rained on him from the sky. The sound of musical drums and its echo filled the air, as if in emulation of the sound of divine drums. Who did not bend low before the anointed prince except his valour which rose very high along with him in the estimation of all ? Then the king summoned the sons of the ministers who had been the prince's friends from childhood and appointed them his ministers. Marubhūti, son of Yaugandharāyaṇa, was made the Chief Minister. Hariśikha, son of Rumaṇvat, was

appointed the General of the army. Tapantaka, son of Vasantaka, was made his sportive companion. Gomukha, son of Ityaka, was appointed the door-keeper. Vaiśvānara and Śāntisoma sons of Piṅgalikā and the nephews of the family priest, were appointed as the family priests of the prince. As soon as the king announced these appointments, the following words were heard from the sky preceded by a shower of flowers : "These ministers will be able to accomplish every object for the prince. Gomukha, however, will be inseparable from him." The king was overjoyed to hear these celestial words and in celebration thereof gave rich presents of ornaments and clothes to all. The city was filled with actors and songsters, as if they were beckoned by the banners with their waving cloths. Even the trees in the gardens appeared to be dancing with their branches shaking in the breeze.

At the conclusion of the anointing ceremony, Prince Naravāhanadatta mounted the royal elephant and started in procession. The ladies of the city cast their uplifted eyes towards him. Having paid his obeisance to the presiding Goddess of the city, the prince returned to his palace praised by bards and heralds and followed by his ministers. Out of her love for the son-in-law, Kaliṅgasenā presented fine clothes and valuable ornaments, out of all proportion to her riches, to Naravāhanadatta and his ministers and retinue. Then there was a royal dinner. In this way the day passed with festivity for one and all in Vatsarāja's court.

On the approach of the night, Kaliṅgasenā summoned her friend, Somaprabhā, in thought to discuss her daughter's marriage. The wise Nalakūbara, the husband of Somaprabhā, told the latter, as soon as she was summoned in thought by her friend, " My dear, Kaliṅgasenā is anxiously thinking of you now. Go and bring into being a divine garden for the use of her daughter." Having said this, he related to her the past and future of Kaliṅgasenā and sent her on her mission. As soon as Somaprabhā arrived, Kaliṅgasenā warmly embraced her. After exchange of greetings, Somaprabhā said, " You are married to an affluent Vidyādhara. By the grace of Śiva, Rati has been born as your daughter. She is destined to be the wife of Naravāhanadatta, son of the King of Vatsa and an incarnation of Kāma. She will he honoured as the chief of his queens. He will rule over the Vidyādhara country for several millions of years. You are an Apsaras and have fallen into this world of mortals by the curse of Indra. On the accomplishment of the rest of your work, you will be released from the curse. All this has been told me by my wise husband. So, friend, do not be sorry ; the future will be prosperous for you. I shall create here for your daughter a garden, the like of which is not found either in this world or in the lower or in the upper world."

Somaprabhā then, by her magical powers, brought into existence a peerless garden and returned to her abode, having taken leave of Kaliṅgasenā.

The next morning, the people were surprised to see the garden there like the Nandana garden suddenly dropped to the earth from heaven. Hearing of it, the King of Vatsa went there with his queens and ministers, his son and his followers and saw the garden. It was filled with trees bearing fruits and flowers of all seasons, with pavements, walls and pillars and ponds built of precious stones, with birds of golden colour and sweet-scented breeze. It appeared like heaven itself descended to the earth by the command of the gods.

"What is this ?" the king enquired of Kaliṅgasenā who was on her way to receive him.

"There is an Asura called Maya, who is an incarnation of Viśvakarman," said she to the king in the presence of all. "He built wonderful palaces for Yudhiṣṭhira and Indra. His daughter Somaprabhā is a friend of mine. She came to me last night and, out of affection, created this garden by her magical powers for the diversion of my daughter."

Thereafter Kaliṅgasenā related to the king her past and future story as revealed by her friend. On hearing Kaliṅgasenā's account which agreed with what the minister and the king had already heard, all doubts were cleared and there was universal rejoicing. The day passed happily thus, the queens entertaining the king and Kaliṅgasenā entertaining the prince.

One day while he was going to the temple for worship, the king met a large number of maidens, wearing fine dresses and decked with costly jewels.

"Who may you be ?" said the king to them.

"We are the different sciences and arts," they replied. "We have come for your son," they continued, "we shall go and enter his mind."

Then they disappeared. The king was astonished and when he returned to the palace, he reported the matter to his queens and ministers. They were overjoyed at the favour of the gods.

One day, the King of Vatsa asked Vāsavadattā to play on the Vīṇā while Prince Naravāhanadatta was present. While she was playing, the prince politely remarked that the instrument had lost its purity of tone.

"*You* play on the Vīṇā. Let us see," said the king.

The prince took the instrument and played on it to the astonishment of even the divine musicians. In this way, he was examined and stood the test of the king in all the arts and sciences. Realising the proficiency of the prince, the king got Madanamañcukā trained in dancing. Naravāhanadatta was never tired of seeing her dance and sing, and he followed her in her dance on every kind of instrument. Madanamañcukā was not happy even for a moment in his

absence and Naravāhanadatta, always eager to see her face, repaired to this or that part of the garden, where Madanamañcukā was brought by her mother. Gomukha, seeing that they enjoyed each other's company, used to relate stories to keep them long together. Naravāhanadatta also discussed all Śāstras with scholars who came from different parts of the country.

One day Naravāhanadatta, accompanied by his ministers, went to see Madanamañcukā. He was welcomed and offered a seat. After a few minutes, Kaliṅgasenā said to Gomukha with a smile, " Once when Prince Naravāhanadatta delayed to come here, Madanamañcukā became anxious and ascended to the top of the palace to see if he was coming. I too followed her. Then descended from the sky a person with a sword in his hand and a crown on his head. He said, ' I am Mānasavega, King of the Vidyādharas. You are a celestial damsel, named Surabhidattā, but have fallen down on the earth through a curse. I know for certain that this your daughter is also divine. Please give your daughter in marriage to me. The alliance will be suitable.' Then I smiled and said to him, ' The gods have ordained that Naravāhanadatta should be her husband. He will become the overlord of you all.' Hearing my words, he flew into the sky and disappeared."

" When our master, the prince, was born here," replied Gomukha, " the Vidyādharas, coming to know from the celestial voice that he would be their future lord, tried to do him harm. I have heard my father

repeat Nārada's words that then Śiva ordered his followers to protect the prince. So the Vidyādharas are our enemies for the time being."

"Then is it not advisable to marry Madanamañcukā to the prince," asked Kaliṅgasenā, frightened at the remembrance of what had happened to herself, "before she is deceived, as I was, by magic?"

"You should yourself hasten the King of Vatsa in this matter," said Gomukha and others on hearing her words.

Naravāhanadatta stayed there for the day, enjoying the sweet company of his beloved in the garden and returned to his palace at night.

The next day, Kaliṅgasenā herself went to the King of Vatsa and spoke to him at length about the marriage of her daughter. After her departure, the king summoned his ministers and said to them in the presence of his queen, "Kaliṅgasenā wants me to expedite the marriage of her daughter. So, what shall we do? Does the public regard her as a common woman or as a chaste one? The opinion of the public has to be respected. Did not Rāma exile Sītā to satisfy his subjects, although she was chaste? Was not Ambā, though obtained with difficulty by Bhīṣma as the spouse for his brother, sent back by him as she had previously chosen another for her husband? Similarly, this Kaliṅgasenā, though she chose me as her husband, was married by Madanavega, and people

censure her for it. So let us allow Naravāhanadatta to marry her daughter in the Gāndharva style, of his own free will."

"My lord, how can Kaliṅgasenā allow this impropriety?" said Yaugandharāyaṇa as soon as he heard the words of the king. "She is a celestial woman and not a common woman; she is frequently spoken of as having a daughter. My friend, the wise demon, told me so."

While they were debating thus among themselves, the following words of Maheśvara were heard from the sky:—

> "Being pleased with her penance, I have myself ordained this Madanamañcukā, who is Rati herself, to be the wife of Naravāhanadatta, who is an incarnation of Madana who was burnt by the fire of my eye. She will be the chief of his queens. He will destroy all his foes by my favour; he will rule over the Vidyādhara region for millions of years."

The king with his followers bowed in obedience to the voice of Maheśvara and decided to perform his son's marriage with Madanamañcukā with pleasure. Having honoured Yaugandharāyaṇa who learnt the truth in the first instance, the king sent for the astrologers and asked them to fix an auspicious day for his son's marriage.

"We read from our Śāstras, O King," they remarked, "that your son will suffer separation from his wife for a short time."

In making preparations for the marriage of his son according to his dignity and riches, the king ransacked not only his capital but the whole world. On the day of the marriage, Kaliṅgasenā decked her daughter with divine ornaments presented by her father, assisted by Somaprabhā who had come with the permission of her husband. At the command of Śiva, celestial damsels, being themselves invisible, blessed the occasion with their music.

Then, amidst the sound of drums and other musical instruments, Naravāhanadatta entered the marriage pavilion already occupied by Madanamañcukā. With marriage threads tied to their hands before, they went through the different auspicious rituals, got up on the altar on which fire had been kindled, and went round the fire. They then appeared like the Sun and the Moon going round the Meru simultaneously. Then the offering of fried grain in the fire was performed. At that time there was a shower of flowers from the sky and the sound of celestial drums surpassed that of the marriage drums. Then Kaliṅgasenā made presents of such large quantities of gold and precious stones to her son-in-law, as made even Kubera, the lord of wealth, to appear indigent before her. The bride and the bridegroom, at the conclusion of the long-expected wedding ceremony, entered the inner apartments of the palace which were overcrowded with ladies.

The vassal kings of Vatsarāja vied with one another in offering presents of gems and jewels to their

suzerain on the occasion, so that the whole city of the king was filled with them. The king also gave presents to his followers on this happy occasion in such a manner that even children in the wombs of their mothers were not excepted. Dancers and songsters crowded into the city from all quarters and filled the whole city with their music and dance.

The festivity in the city lasted for several days, becoming more grand from day to day. All the people in the city, with their friends and relatives, felt happy and all their desires were fulfilled. Prince Naravāhanadatta, in the company of Madanamañcukā, spent his days happily enjoying the pleasures of the world.

II. KANAKAREKHĀ

असिद्धार्था निवर्तन्ते न हि धीराः कृतोद्यमाः ।

'The resolute, persisting in their efforts, never turn back without achieving their object.'

II. KANAKAREKHĀ

There was once a king, Paropakārin by name, in the city of Vardhamāna, which was, as it were, an ornament to the whole world. Kanakaprabhā was the name of his queen. She added to the glory of the king, as the lightning to the rain cloud, but she had not the fickleness of the latter. In course of time the queen gave birth to a daughter who was so exquisitely beautiful that one might think Brahman had created her only to quell the pride of beauty of Lakṣmī. She was as pleasing to the eyes of the people as the moonlight. The king named her Kanakarekhā after her mother. As she grew into maidenhood, the king became more and more anxious to secure a suitable husband for her.

"Growing in my mind concurrently with her growth," the king said one day to his queen in private, "the thought of securing a suitable husband for our daughter troubles me day and night. A girl, like learning, bestowed, through ignorance, upon an unworthy person will bring neither fame nor merit, but on the contrary, cause repentance. So I am considering deeply to which king I might marry her. I am unable to decide which king is worthy of her."

On hearing the king's words, Queen Kanakaprabhā smiled and said, "You say so, my lord; but our daughter says that she does not want to marry at all.

Even now, while she was sporting with dolls, I expressed my desire to see her married. Then she told me reproachfully, 'No, no, mother! I am not to be married to anybody. My separation from you is not necessary. I am fortunate as a maiden. Otherwise know me as dead. There is reason for my saying so.' I felt sorry at her words and came to you. When she has prohibited her marriage, why should we trouble ourselves about finding a worthy husband for her?"

The king was astonished at the words of the queen, and immediately went to the apartments of his daughter.

"Even the Deva and Asura maidens, my darling," said he to his daughter, "perform penance with the object of obtaining husbands. That being the case, why do you shun marriage?"

Hearing the words of her father, Kanakarekhā remained silent for a moment with down-cast eyes. Then she said, "I do not desire to marry now. Why do you want me to do so? Why are you so particular about it?"

"What else can destroy my sins except the gift of a daughter?" said he to his daughter. "A maiden cannot live independently under the care of her relatives. From the time of her birth," he continued, "a maiden is brought up for some one else. Except in her childhood, of what avail is her father's house to

her without a husband ? If a maiden attains puberty before marriage, her relatives are doomed. She is called an outcaste, and one who marries her is called the husband of an outcaste."

" If so, father," said Kanakarekhā, " give me in marriage to a Brāhmaṇa or a Kṣatriya who has been competent enough to see the city of Kanakapurī. He will be my husband. Otherwise, O father, don't torment me for no purpose."

The king was glad that his daughter had given him an opportunity to try to bring about her marriage. " This is some goddess," he thought, " born in my house with some purpose. Otherwise, how can such a small girl be in the know of such things ?"

The next morning, the king asked his courtiers, if any of them had seen the city of Kanakapurī. " If any Brāhmaṇa or Kṣatriya among you has seen it," said the king, " I shall give my daughter in marriage to him and present him with half of my kingdom."

Then the courtiers looked at each other and said to the king, " Your Majesty, we have not even heard the name of the city. How could we have seen it ?"

The king then called his doorkeeper and ordered him to proclaim in the city with the beating of the drum that the king would give half his kingdom and his daughter in marriage to a Brāhmaṇa or a Kṣatriya who had seen the city of Kanakapurī. The citizens

were surprised to hear the proclamation about Kanakapurī which even the elders in the city had not heard of, much less seen. Nobody came forward to say that he had seen the city of Kanakapurī.

Now, there was in the city at that time a Brāhmaṇa youth named Śaktideva, son of Baladeva. He was addicted to vices and had lost all his money in gambling. "Having lost all my money in gambling," he thought, "I will have entrance neither into my father's house nor into that of a courtezan. Being helpless, I shall try my luck by lying, and tell the proclaimer that I have seen the city. But who will believe me if I say so? Where and when did any one see the unknown city? Let it be. By this means I may have at least access to the princess."

Having thought like this, he approached the king's servants and told them that he had seen the city of Kanakapurī. They were overjoyed and took him to the doorkeeper. When he told the same lie to the doorkeeper, the latter took him to the king. When he gave the same lie to the king, the latter sent the Brāhmaṇa to his daughter to find out the truth. The doorkeeper introduced him to the princess who asked the Brāhmaṇa if he had seen the city of Kanakapurī.

"Yes, lady; I have certainly seen the city in my travels in the world during my student days," replied he.

"By what route did you go there?" she again asked him. "And what sort of city is it?"

" From here I first went to Harapura," he replied. " From there I reached Vārāṇasī in the course of some days. From Vārāṇasī I went to the city of Pauṇḍravardhana. From there I went to the city of Kanakapurī. It is a place of enjoyment to people who have done meritorious deeds. It is a place whose beauty is to be enjoyed with unwinking eyes, like that of the city of Indra. After finishing my education there, I returned to this place."

" O great Brāhmaṇā, you have truly seen the city !" said she smilingly. " Tell me, tell me again, by what route you went there."

When he was about to act impudently on hearing her words, Kanakarekhā got him removed from her presence by her servants. She then went to her father who asked her if the Brāhmaṇa had really seen the city.

" Being a king, O father," she said, " why do you act without deliberation ? Don't you know that there are rogues capable of deceiving honest people ? That Brāhmaṇa tried to deceive me. That liar had not seen the city. I shall relate to you a story to illustrate how rogues deceive honest people."

1. STORY OF ŚIVA AND MĀDHAVA

There were once two rouges, called Śiva and Mādhava, living in the city of Ratnapurī, of significant name. With a large number of rouges as their followers, they deceived most of the rich people in the city with their tricks. One day they held a secret consultaion:

" We have robbed this city completely. Let us therefore go to Ujjayinī and live there for some time. It is said that the

priest of the king of that place, Śaṅkarasvāmin by name, is very opulent. With the help of the money obtained from him, we may enjoy the company of the sportive women of the Mālava region. It is said that he frowns on all beggars, and he is niggardly. It is also reported that he has a single daughter. We may also secure her by deception."

Then they decided about the plan to be followed at Ujjayinī and left Ratnapurī. On reaching Ujjayinī, Mādhava put on the appearance of a prince and put up with his followers in a village outside the city. Śiva entered the city alone in the disguise of a religious student. He took his abode in a small cell on the bank of the Śiprā, with mud, Kuśa grass, begging bowl and deer skin prominently displayed at the entrance. Every day in the morning, he smeared his body with mud and remained immersed in the water for a long time with his face turned down. After his bath he stood for a long time with his face turned up towards the sun. Then he went to the temple and sat there with his legs crossed in meditation and with a bundle of Kuśa grass in his hand. Then he worshipped God with flowers and spent some more time in meditation. In the afternoon he covered himself with a deer skin and went a-begging in the city. He collected alms from the houses of the three highest castes, observing silence all the time. He divided what he got into three parts, and threw one part to the crows and gave another part to the guests. The remaining third part he ate for his sustenance. After his meal, he again spent a long time in meditation. He slept alone in the night in the cell.

In this way parctising false austerities, he attracted the attention of the citizens.

"O, how tranquil is this ascetic!" remarked all the people who bowed before him out of reverence.

By this time, the other fellow, Mādhava, came to know of this through his spies. He came to the city and settled down in another temple far away, still in the disguise of a prince. One day he took

a bath in the Śiprā river along with his followers and saw Śiva sitting in meditation. With intense devotion, he fell prostrate before Śiva's feet.

" I visited many holy places several times," he said to the people around him, " but I did not see such an ascetic anywhere." Śiva saw him but sat stiff in his pretended meditation and Mādhava returned to his residence.

The two used to meet in the night in a place and eat and drink together and decide upon their plans. In the early morning they used to go to their respective places of residence. One morning Mādhava summoned one of his followers and asked him to take a pair of cloths as a present to the king's family priest, Śaṅkarasvāmin, and convey the following message to him:

> " A prince, Mādhava by name, who was ill-treated by his relatives, has come here from the south, taking with him much paternal wealth. He is accompanied by some other princes of equal rank. He wants to serve your king here. I have been sent by him to meet you and inform you of this."

The rogue went to the priest's house with the present, and at an opportune moment when he was alone, offered him the present and conveyed the message. Covetous of the present, the priest believed his words.

Some days later, Mādhava paid a visit to the priest, after previously obtaining his permission. He went there followed by bogus princes, all in the costume of pilgrims and surrounded by servants carrying staves with insignia. Mādhava approached the priest with reverence, and the latter rose and received him with delight. Mādhava spent a few minutes with him in general conversation and, taking leave of him, returned to his residence.

The next day, Mādhava again sent a present of two pieces of cloth through a follower and then went to see the priest.

" I am seeking service under the king only at the solicitations of my followers," he said to the priest. " So I have come to you. I have sufficient wealth for myself."

The priest thought that he could derive some advantage from him and so promised to help Mādhava in his endeavour. He immediately went to the king and represented the matter to him. Out of regard for the priest, the king agreed to take Mādhava into his service.

The next day the priest introduced Mādhava to the king. From his appearance the king mistook him for a prince, duly honoured him and provided him with some employment. Mādhava was there in the service of the king during the daytime but was meeting his friend, Śiva, every night to hold consultations with him.

The priest became greedy for money and therefore requested Mādhava to come and reside in his own house with his followers. Mādhava accordingly took his residence in the priest's house. He prepared a number of ornaments with shining imitation precious stones, put them in a box and kept the box in the priest's chest for safe custody. Now and then he used to take them under some pretext and allow the priest to see them, and yearn for them.

When he gained the complete confidence of the priest, Mādhava feigned loss of appetite and reduced his body by taking less and less food. After a few days, the bogus prince spoke in a low voice to the priest who was sitting by his bedside, " My condition has become serious. So, my friend, invite some good Brāhmaṇa. I want to present to him all the wealth that I have for my happiness here in this world and the next. Wise men should not care for their lives and wealth which are transitory."

The priest, who was living on his generosity, promised to do so and Mādhava bowed to him in gratitude. But he rejected every Brāhmaṇa that the priest brought under the pretext of desiring a better one. Observing this, a rouge who was sitting by his bedside

said, " My friend, any ordinary Brāhmaṇa will not satisfy his desire. Please find out if he is not thinking of Śiva, who has been performing meditation on the banks of the Śiprā." Hearing his words, Mādhava, in feigned anguish, said to the priest, " Oh! Please be kind enough to bring him! There is no other Brāhmaṇa like him."

The priest immediately went to Śiva and found him absorbed in deep meditation. He went round him and saluted him and seated himself before him. Then the false mendicant slowly opened his eyes, and espied the priest. The latter saluted him and humbly said to him, " If you condescend to hear without getting angry, I have to say something to you."

When Śiva nodded in assent, the priest said, " There is an opulent prince here, called Mādhava, from the south. He is now seriously ill and desires to make a donation of his wealth to a fit recipient. His wealth includes many peerless jewels. If you deign to receive it, he will be glad to present it to you."

" O Sir, of what use is wealth to me," said Śiva slowly, breaking his silence, " a bachelor living by begging?"

" Don't say so, O great Brāhmaṇa," replied the priest. " Don't you know the duties of the different stages of life? The householder, the best of the men of the four orders of life, attains the triple end of life, by taking a wife and accomplishing with the aid of his wealth acts contributing to the satisfaction of the gods, manes and men."

" How can I obtain a wife!" replied Śiva. " I cannot marry a girl belonging to an ordinary family."

The avaricious priest thought that a good opportunity had presented itself to him to enjoy the wealth easily and said to him, " Then I have a daughter, called Vinayasvāminī, who is very fair and beautiful. I shall give her in marriage to you. The wealth that you receive from Mādhava, I shall keep for you. So take up the householder's order."

The rogue Śiva thought that his object was being fulfilled and said, "If you insist upon it, I shall follow your adivce. But as regards the jewellery, I am inexperienced, being a mendicant. I shall depend entirely on your words. Do as you please."

The priest was pleased at his words and brought Śiva to his house, and reported the matter to Mādhava who was in his turn pleased at it. The foolish priest then married his dear daughter to Śiva on the very day and brought him to Mādhava on the third day for the presentation of the jewels.

"I bow to you, venerable mendicant," so saying Mādhava fell at the feet of Śiva. Then he formally presented Śiva with all the false jewellery stored in the chest of the priest. Śiva accepted the jewellery, but he immediately handed it over to the priest, saying, "I do not know anything about this, but you know it all."

"I have already consented to take charge of this," said the priest. "You need not worry about it." So saying he took charge of the box of jewels, and after Śiva had gone to his residence with his bride, he deposited the box in his chest again.

From the next day, Mādhava pretended to regain his appetite gradually and said that he had been cured of his malady as a result of his gift to the Brāhmaṇa.

"By your meritorious help," he eulogised the priest, "I could get out of this danger."

Mādhava openly declared his friendship with Śiva from that time, saying, "I am continuing to live only by his miraculous power."

A few days later, Śiva said to the priest, "How long am I to continue to live in your house and depend upon your hospitality? Why don't you yourself pay me the price of those ornaments and take them! If you think they are invaluable, pay me as much as you can."

The foolish priest thought that they were really invaluable and promised to pay all the money that he had as price for the jewels. He asked Śiva to execute a deed in his favour for the sale of the jewels and he himself executed another deed for the purchase of the same, thinking that he was striking a bargain very favourable to him. Taking the deed and the money, Śiva set up a separate establishment of his own. Mādhava joined him and they both lived happily with the money got from the priest.

As time went on, the priest was pressed for money and so he took one of the ornaments for sale to the market. The diamond merchants examined the ornament and declared it to be spurious.

" He must be a clever goldsmith who made this," they said. " This is not real gold and these are not real gems. They are coloured glass pieces."

The bewildered priest ran home, brought all the ornaments and showed them to the merchants. They examined and pronounced them all to be false ones. The priest was thunderstruck and at once went to Śiva and asked him to take his ornaments and give back the price that he had paid.

" Where is the money! I spent all the money to maintain myself all these days," replied Śiva.

They quarrelled for a long time over the affair and finally went to the king, taking Mādhava also with them for settlement of their dispute. Each stated his case before the king.

" May it please Your Majesty, this Śiva brought a large number of false ornaments with glass pieces coloured and polished like gems and misappropriated all my property by selling them to me," complained the priest.

" I have been a mendicant from birth, my sovereign Lord," submitted Śiva in reply, " I accepted the offer only on his own importunity. I made it known to him then that I was ignorant of gems and that I entirely depended on his judgment. He assured

me that he would be answerable for them. So I accepted the jewels, but deposited them with him. Then he purchased them from me of his own free will," he continued. "and paid money to me. There are deeds in our own handwriting, executed in token of the transaction. Your Majesty may now judge the genuineness of the transaction."

"If the ornaments are worthless." remarked the priest, "Mādhava must be held responsible."

"Don't say so, my revered friend," said Mādhava immediately. "There is no mistake on my part. I have not received anything in return for the jewels either from you or from Śiva. My paternal property had been kept in deposit with another for a long time. I then got it and presented it to this Brāhmaṇa. If they are not really made of pure gold and if the gems are not genuine, then let me reap the fruit of making a present of false gems. Heaven has vindicated my sincerity in making the gift, because I have been cured of my illness."

When he spoke these words without change in his complexion, the king and his minister laughed over the affair and were pleased at the conduct of Mādhava.

"Śiva and Mādhava have not in any way acted unjustly," remarked all the people present with a laugh. The priest who was robbed of his money went home hanging down his head in shame. The rogues Śiva and Mādhava lived thereafter in happiness enjoying the full confidence of the king.

"In this manner rogues cast nets of falsehood with their tongues. Similary this Brāhmaṇa wants to secure me by telling a lie that he has seen the city of Kanakapurī. So, father, don't make haste now about my marriage. I shall remain a maid for the present. Let us see what turns up," concluded Kanakarekhā.

"It is not proper for you to remain a maiden for a long time after you have come of age," said her father. "Wicked people, envious of virtue, attribute evil to others. People take delight specially in vilifying good people. I shall relate to you the story of Harasvāmin in proof thereof."

2. STORY OF HARASVĀMIN

There was a city called Kusumapura on the banks of the Gaṅgā, and there was an ascetic, called Harasvāmin, living in that place, attracted by the holy waters of the river. He was residing in a hut on the bank of the river and supporting himself by begging. He won the esteem of one and all by his meditations. One day, while he was on his round a-begging, a wicked person, envious of his fame, said to the people around him, "Do you know what a deceitful ascetic he has become? He has devoured all the children in this city!"

"Yes, I heard people say so," remarked a second man like him.

"Yes, yes, it is so," said a third man supporting him.

In this manner the rumours passed from mouth to mouth and spread among all the people in the city. The people prevented their children from going out of their houses saying that Harasvāmin would carry away and eat them up. Then the Brāhmaṇas in the city, for fear of the loss of their children, met together and decided to exile him from the city. They were afraid to convey their decision to him directly, because they thought he might destroy them also. So they sent messengers to convey the message to him. The messengers went and stood at a safe distance from him and told him that the Brāhmaṇas wanted him to leave the city. Harasvāmin was astonished and asked them why he was to be banished. They replied that it was decided so because he had devoured the children.

Then Harasvāmin, casting off fear, went to the Brāhmaṇas himself in order to produce confidence in them. Seeing him approach, the Brāhmaṇas ascended to the tops of their houses. But Harasvāmin, standing below, called each Brāhmaṇa individually by name, and said to them, " O Brāhmaṇas, are you mad? Why don't you verify facts? How many children have I eaten? Whose children? Where?"

When the Brāhmaṇas consulted each other, they found that all their children were safe and sound. People of the other castes also admitted that their children were safe.

" We are all fools to defame this virtuous man, when all our children are safe" said all the people with one voice.

Though thus exonerated, Harasvāmin wanted to go out of the city which was full of foolish people; but when all the citizens bowed to him and implored him, he consented to stay.

" In this way wicked people are always prone to attribute evil to good people. When they find an opporutnity, they flare up like flames. So if you want to save me from infamy, don't desire to be free in your youth but deign to marry some one," concluded King Paropakārin.

" I have already given you my mind," said Kanakarekhā. " If you can find any Brāhmaṇa or Kṣatriya who has seen Kanakapurī, then I shall marry him. This is my determination."

Knowing her mind, the king again proclaimed in the city, with the beating of drums, that if any Brāhmaṇa or Kṣatriya had seen Kanakapurī, he might present himself before the king who would then not only give this daughter in marriage to him but would

also bestow on him half his kingdom. But nobody came forward claiming to have seen that city.

Now, the Brāhmaṇa youth, Śaktideva, who was feeling wretched after having been insulted by the maiden whom he wanted to espouse, mused as follows :

"Speaking falsely that I had seen the city of Kanakapurī, I courted insult. So to win her, I shall wander over the world till I see Kanakapurī ; or else I shall end my life. Fie upon my life, if I cannot win the princess !"

Having made up his mind in this manner, Śaktideva left the city of Vardhamāna and proceeded in the direction of the South. In the course of a few days, he reached the Vindhya forest, which was as dense and large as his desire.

After travelling for several days, Śaktideva saw a large lake with cool and transparent water in a lonely part of the forest. It seemed to be enjoying the overlordship of all the lakes by its royal insignia of umbrellas and *chouries* in the form of white lotuses and swans. He refreshed himself by bathing in the lake. Then he observed a hermitage on the northern bank of the lake, amidst fruit trees. There sitting under a holy fig tree, an aged sage could be seen surrounded by other sages. He had a rosary hanging from his ear containing a hundred beads, as if to indicate his age. Śaktideva approached him and prostrated himself before him. The sage received him and showed

him all the honours due to a guest. The sage shared the fruits and other eatables with him and asked whence he had come and whither he was bound.

"Revered Sir, I am coming from the city of Vardhamāna," replied Śaktideva, "and I am proceeding to Kanakapurī under a vow. But I know not where that city lies, and I beseach you to tell me if you happen to know."

"My son, I have passed one hundred and eight years in this hermitage," said the sage, "but I have not even heard the name of Kanakapurī all these years."

Śaktideva was filled with sorrow when he heard the words of the sage and regretfully said, "Then I should die roaming about the world."

"If you are determined to find the city at all costs," said the sage, on realising Śaktideva's resolution, "then do as I tell you. There is the country of Kāmpilya, at a distance of three hundred *yojanas* from here. There is a mountain in it called Uttara. In a hermitage on the mountain, there is my elder brother, called Sage Dīrghatapas. Go to him and ask him. Being older than I am, he might know the city."

With renewed confidence on hearing these words, Śaktideva spent the night there and started the next morning on his journey. Traversing dense forests with great effort on the way, he at last reached the country of Kāmpilya and climbed the Uttara Mountain. In a hermitage there he saw the ascetic Dīrghatapas and saluted him, and was received kindly by him.

"I have started in search of the city of Kanakapurī," said he to the ascetic, "as desired by a princess; but I am ignorant of its location. Will you please tell me, Sire, where it is? I have to find the city to win the princess. The ascetic Sūryatapas, your younger brother, advised me to meet you."

"Old as I am, my son," replied the sage, "I hear of this city for the first time now. I am acquainted with all the people coming from distant lands. Still I have not heard of this city. How could I have seen it? But I surely know a place in another island, which perhaps is near that city. I shall teach you the means to reach there. There is an island called Utsthala, in the middle of the sea. There lives in it the rich Satyavrata, the chief of the Niṣādas. He frequently visits all other islands. He might have seen the city or at least heard of it. So first repair to the city of Viṭaṅka, on the shores of the sea. From there you may go to the island in which the Niṣāda chief lives in the company of some merchant in his vessel."

Śaktideva immediately bade good-bye to the sage and left his hermitage. He travelled several leagues and crossed several countries and finally reached the city of Viṭaṅka on the seashore. There he enquired and found out a merchant, named Samudradatta who was intending to sail to the island of Utsthala and made friends with him. He was kind enough to take Śaktideva in his vessel and so they both set sail to that island. When they were at a short distance from

their destination, there suddenly arose a terrible storm with deafening thunder and blinding lightning. Light objects were blown away far and heavy ones were thrown down by the tremendous gale. Huge waves like mountains rose in the sea. The ship, for a moment, was tossed up and down by the waves and broke the next moment into pieces, as if it had become too heavy with the fear of sailors.

The owner of the ship, the merchant Samudradatta, saved himself with the help of a plank, and after a time was picked up by another vessel and reached the shore. Śaktideva as soon as he fell in the sea, was swallowed whole by a huge fish without causing any hurt to his body. Swimming at will in the sea, the fish, providentially, reached the shore of the island of Utsthala. There, as fate would have it, the giant fish was caught by the fisher servants of Satyavrata, the chief of the fishermen of the island. Astonished at the size of the fish, the fishermen carried it to the presence of their master. The curious Satyavrata ordered his servants to cut the fish to pieces. No sooner had the fish been cut into two, than Śaktideva issued out of it alive, as if out of the womb of his mother for the second time, and greeted him.

" Who are you?" asked the astonished Satyavrata. " Why and how did you get into the body of the fish? Tell me your wonderful story."

Then Śaktideva related his story to Satyavrata. " I am a Brāhmaṇa, Śaktideva by name, and I belong to

the city of Vardhamāna. I have necessarily to go the city of Kanakapurī. Not knowing the way to the city, I have wandered far in the land. By the advice of the sage Dīrghatapas and with the help of a merchant, I set sail in a ship to the island of Utsthala, to get information about the city from Satyavrata the chief of the fisher-folk, living in the island. By my misfortune, the ship was broken in a storm, I fell into the sea, but was swallowed by the fish and brought here."

"I am that Satyavrata, and this is that island of Utsthala," said the fisher-chief. "But, though I have visited many islands, I have not yet seen the city mentioned by you."

Seeing Śaktideva feel despondent on hearing his words, Satyavrata spoke encouragingly. "Don't be dejected, my good man. Rest here for the night. In the morning, I shall teach you the means to attain your desire."

The fisher-chief then commanded the same fishermen to take Śaktideva to a monastery where Brāhmaṇas were fed free. He was fed there by a resident of the monastery called Viṣṇudatta and after his meal he entered into conversation with him. Śaktideva informed Viṣṇudatta of his native place, family and the mission on which he had started. Viṣṇudatta then embraced him and said, with his throat choked with tears of joy, "Thank God, you are then my uncle's son and we both belong to the same place. I migrated to this place while very young. You had better stay

here;" continued he, " before long your desire will be fulfilled by the news brought by merchants coming from other islands."

Viṣṇudatta then attended to all the wants of Śaktideva and the latter therefore did not feel the toil of his journey and expected that his desire would soon be fulfilled.

The next morning, the fisher-chief, Satyavrata, came to the monastery where Śaktideva was putting up, as he had promised the previous day and said, " O Brāhmaṇa, I hit upon a plan to accomplish your object. There is an island in the middle of the sea, called Ratnakūṭa. There is a temple in the island dedicated to Viṣṇu by the lord of the ocean. A great festival takes place in it on the twelfth day of the bright fortnight of the month of Āṣāḍha, which is attended without fail by people from all islands. You may perchance hear of the city of Kanakapurī there. Come, let us go there as the festival day is approaching." Śaktideva was very glad to do so and started with Satyavrata, taking with him what Viṣṇudatta provided him for the journey. He got into a ship brought by Satyavrata and they both set sail in it. Then passing through the marvellous sea filled with crocodiles as big as islands, Śaktideva said to Styavrata, " What is that huge thing in the sea at that distance, which has the semblance of a mountain with wings rising from out of the sea?"

" It is the divine fig tree and under it is the huge whirl-pool which leads to the submarine fire. I am

keeping at a safe distance from it, because there will be no hope for us if we enter it."

Even while Satyavrata was saying so, the vessel commenced to move towards the whirlpool by the force of the current.

" O Brāhmaṇa, we are surely nearing the hour of our destruction!" cried Satyavrata, as soon as he observed the motion of the vessel. " See, see, the vessel moves only that way! I am not able to prevent it by any means: I have lost control! The current is by its force driving us into the whirlpool! I am not sorry for my death," he continued, " for this body has to die some time. I am only worried that you are not able to fulfil your desire even under great difficulty. So, while I stop the ship for a moment, you had better quickly take hold of a branch of the fig tree. May be, some means of escape may present itself to you, if you are fortunate; for who can divine the ways of fortune?"

As Satyavrata finished speaking, the vessel came near the tree and immediately Śaktideva, collecting courage, jumped up and caught hold of a thick branch. Satyavrata drifted with the vessel and met with a watery grave for the sake of a friend. Hanging from one of the branches of the tree, which reached the ends of quarters, Śaktideva contemplated as follows: " I was not able to see the city of Kanakapurī; and the fisher-chief met with destruction through the loss of the vessel. Who can change at will the inevitable course of destiny which overtakes every one"? Meditating in this manner

the Brāhmaṇa youth passed the day on the tree. In the evening, he observed myriads of birds coming and resting on the tree, filling the quarters with the sound of their wings and causing the sea to roll into huge waves by the winds raised by their large wings. He hid himself in the thick foliage of the tree and heard, unseen, the conversation of the birds carried on in the human tongue. Each one of them described to the others the place to which it had been that day, be it another island, a mountain, or a country. One old bird among them said, "I had been to Kanakapurī today for recreation. I shall go there again tomorrow for diversion; why should I tire myself by going a long way?"

Śaktideva was relieved of his misery on hearing the words of the bird and said to himself, "Thank God, the city exists! The only means open to me to reach the city is by riding on this bird."

He slowly crawled to the bird when it had fallen asleep and clung, concealed, to the feathers of its tail. When all the other birds dispersed in different directions in the morning, the old bird rose up to the sky with Śaktideva concealed on its back and flew to Kanakapurī to divert itself there. When the bird alighted in a garden, Śaktideva got down from the back of the bird. Walking slowly here and there in the garden, he came across two maidens engaged in picking flowers.

"What is this place? Who may you be?" he asked the maidens, who were astonished at his presence there.

" This city is called Kanakapurī and it is the residence of the Vidyādharas," they replied. " There is a Vidyādharī in this place called Candraprabhā. We are her gardeners. We are picking flowers for her."

" Can you do me the favour of taking me to your mistress?" he asked.

They consented to do so and took him with them to the royal palace in the city, which, he saw, had walls of gold and pillars of gems. All the servants in the palace were astonished at the approach of a mortal and immediately reported the news to Candraprabhā. She at once despatched her doorkeeper who brought him to her presence. Her appearance was so pleasing to his eyes that he thought her form exhibited the maximum beauty which the Creator could produce. She on her part was attracted by his appearance and welcomed him from afar getting up from her seat of gems. When he was seated, she questioned him who he was and how he could come to such an inaccessible place. Śaktideva informed her of his name, race and native place, and then described to her how he came to see the city on a wager to win the Princess Kanakarekhā. On hearing his words, Candraprabhā fell into deep meditation, sighed deeply and then spoke to him in private as follows:—

" Listen carefully to what I am going to say. There is in this country a Vidyādhara king called Śaśikhaṇḍa. We are four daughters born to him. I am called Candraprabhā. The next is Candrarekhā. Śaśirekhā is the third and Śaśiprabhā is

the fourth. We grew up in our paternal home. One day, while I was engaged in a vow appropriate to maidens, my three sisters went to bathe in the Celestial Gaṅgā. Being in the prime of youth, they began to sport in the water and sprinkled water on Agryatapas who was engaged in meditation in water. When they persisted in their sport even when warned by him, he became angry and cursed them: 'Ye wretched maids, may you all be born in the world of men.' When my father came to know of this, he went and pacified the sage. The latter promised the end of his curse in a separate manner to each of them and favoured them in their mortal form with knowledge of their race and divine wisdom. When they had left their celestial bodies and departed to be born in the world of mortals, my father left this city for me and went to the forest in sorrow. As I was thus living in this city, the goddess Ambikā appeared to me in dream one day and said, "My darling, you will have a mortal for your husband." So I have rejected several Vidyādharas proposed by my father as suitable matches for me and remained a maiden till now. I am now completely overcome by your arrival here and by your appearance and so I offer myself to you. I shall go on the approaching fourteenth day of the fortnight to the Ṛṣabha mountain to speak to my father in your favour. Every year on that day, all the Vidyādharas from every direction assemble there to worship God Hara. My father also goes there. I shall take his permission and return here quickly. You then marry me. Yoy may stay here till then."

She then provided him with all the enjoyments befitting a Vidyādhara. Śaktideva was thus spending his days happily there.

When the fourteenth day of the fortnight arrived, Candraprabhā said to him, " I am going now to speak to my father on your behalf. All my servants will accompany me. You have somehow to pass two days in loneliness in this palace. But you should not under any circumstances go up to the first floor." Having warned him in this manner, she departed. Being left alone, Śaktideva roamed from place to place to divert his mind. He became curious to know why the Vidyādhara maiden had warned him not to go to the first floor of the palace. He therefore climbed up to that floor, because as everybody knows, a forbidden fruit is sweet. There he found three chambers built of gems. He pushed the door of one and entered it. Inside he found someone lying on a soft bed spread on a cot of gems and covered from head to foot. Removing the coverlet, he found the dead body of the beautiful daughter of King Paropakārin. On seeing it he began to reflect as follows: " What is this wonder? Is she sleeping continuously without awaking or is she lying unconscious? She is here for whom I have undertaken this sojourn. She is dead here but living there; she, however, retains her loveliness here. Truly, for some reason or other the Creator is playing this deception on me."

Then he came out of the chamber and entered and examined the other two chambers. In each he found

a maiden similarly sleeping. Full of astonishment, he came out and seated himself in a place. Suddenly, his eye fell upon a magnificent well below and a horse with a saddle of gems by its side. He got down and went to the side of the horse and finding nobody there he tried to mount the horse. With one kick, the horse threw him into the well. He sank under the water in the well and emerged out of it, to his astonishment, among the lotuses of a tank in the garden in his own town, Vardhamāna.

"Where is the city of the Vidyādharas and where is this town of my birth?" thought he. "How wonderful! What delusion is this! Alas, poor soul, I am deceived by somebody. None can foresee what is to happen."

Musing like this, he got out of the pond and slowly wended his way to his paternal home. There he was welcomed by his relatives to whom he recounted the story of his wanderings and deceits.

The next day when he went out on a walk, he again heard the proclamation that the king would bestow his daughter in marriage on a Brāhmaṇa or a Kṣatriya who had seen Kanakapurī and make him heir to the throne. Śaktideva approached the announcers and declared to them that he had seen Kanakapurī. When he was taken to the king, the latter thought that he was telling lies as before.

"If I am not speaking the truth," said Śaktideva, "if I have not seen the city of Kanakapurī, then you

may hang me. Let the princess come and question me now."

Then the king sent for his daughter. When she saw Śaktideva, whom she had seen before, she remarked, "My dear father, he is again speaking falsehood."

"I may speak the truth or utter a falsehood," replied Śaktideva, "but tell me how this is, O Princess, to satisfy my curiosity. I saw you lifeless on a couch in Kanakapurī, but I see you alive here."

When Śaktideva said so in token of his having seen the city of Kanakapurī, Kanakarekhā said to her father, "O my father, this noble person has really seen the city of Kanakapurī. He will shortly become my husband when I shall be there. He will be overlord of the Vidyādharas in that city. I have now to re-enter my body and my city. Owing to the curse of a sage, I was born in your house here. My curse would be at an end, he said, when a mortal would perceive my body in Kanakapurī and reveal the truth of my existence in human form, and that man would be my husband. Though in human form, I have the ability to remember my real nature. So I shall now return to the abode of the Vidyādharas to attain my powers."

So saying, the princess left her body and disappeared, plunging the whole palace in deep sorrow. Śaktideva who suffered loss in both ways, as he was unable to obtain his beloved here or there, cursed himself and left the palace.

"Kanakarekhā herself declared," he began to think, "that my desire would be fulfilled; so why should I be dejected? Achievement certainly results from exertion. I shall again proceed to Kanakapurī by the same path. Fortune will certainly help me again to find some means of reaching the place."

Having thus made up his mind, Śaktideva again left the city on his mission. In course of time, he again reached the city of Viṭaṅka on the sea-shore. There he encountered the merchant Samudradatta, who was shipwrecked with him when they sailed together. Śaktideva was surprised to find that he too was saved like himself. Samudradatta recognised Śaktideva and affectionately embraced him and took him to his house. On being questioned by him, Śaktideva related to him how he was saved and in his turn asked Samudradatta to tell him how he was saved.

"On falling into the sea," said he, "I caught hold of a plank and managed to float on the water. After drifting for three days, I sighted a ship and cried for help. The ship's crew heard my cries and lifted me into the vessel. What was my pleasure and astonishment when I found in the ship my own father who was returning home after visiting other countries on business! He recognised and embraced me and asked me in tears how I happened to fall into that sorry plight. 'When you had not returned from your travels even after a long time,' I told him, 'I took up trade as being our profession and set sail to foreign countries. As ill luck would have it, I was shipwrecked on the voyage, but

was rescued by the crew of this ship.' On hearing my story, my father reproached me for risking my life in that manner in maritime enterprise when I could live happily at home with the wealth earned by him and when he was still alive to earn more. Then he brought me in his ship to our home in Viṭaṅkapura."

Having rested for the night in the house of Samudradatta, Śaktideva started the next morning for the island of Utsthala along with the servants of Samudradatta, who were about to sail to the island for trade. On arriving at the island, Śaktideva wanted to put up with his former friend, Viṣṇudatta, and went about the market place in search of his residence. On the way he was met by the sons of the fisher-chief who recognised him from a distance and accosted him.

" O Brāhmaṇa, you went along with our father in search of Kanakapurī. Why have you returned alone?"

" Our ship being carried by the current, your father fell in the submarine fire in the sea," replied Śaktideva.

The fisher-chief's sons were enraged at his words and ordered their servants to bind him hand and foot, saying, " This wretch has done away with our father; otherwise how is it possible that, out of two men sailing in the same vessel, one should fall into the submarine fire and the other escape with life? So we shall offer his body in sacrifice to the Goddess Caṇḍikā tomorrow morning."

The servants accordingly bound Śaktideva hand and foot and carried him to the temple of the Goddess Caṇḍikā, which appeared to him as terrible as the mouth of death.

On being left alone, he praised the Goddess in the following terms:

"O Goddess Durgā, with your form, red like the rising sun, as if by the spreading of the blood of the wicked demon sumptuously drunk, you have protected the world.

"O beneficent Goddess, protect me also who am always submissive to you, who have unfortunately fallen into hostile hands and who have come a long way with a desire to obtain my beloved."

Gradually, he fell into a deep sleep and in his dream he saw a woman issuing from the sanctuary of the temple. With a compassionate air she approached him and said "O Śaktideva, don't fear; no ill luck will attend you. There is a sister to these fisher-chiefs, called Bindumatī. That maiden will see you in the morning and will entreat you to marry her. Accept her offer and she will bring about your release. She is not a fisher woman," the apparition continued, "she is a divine being, fallen by a curse."

When Śaktideva got up in the morning, he was pleased to see the fisher-maid coming towards the temple of the Goddess. She approached him and spoke earnestly, "I rejected several suitors selected by my

brothers. Somehow, I have been attracted by you. So accept me as your spouse. If you fulfil my desire, I shall see that you are set free."

Recollecting his dream, Śaktideva consented to marry Bindumatī. As enjoined by the Goddess in a dream, the fisher-chiefs complied with her request and so Śaktideva was set free and married their sister, and was living happily with the divine woman in human form.

One day, from the top of his palace, Śaktideva saw an outcaste passing on the road with a load of cow's flesh on his head.

"My darling, cows are to be respected in the three worlds," said he to his wife. "See, this wicked person eats their flesh."

"My dear, we should not even think of it," replied Bindumati, "let alone committing the sin. Owing to a small fault, I was born into this fisher class by the power of the cows. Where is the expiation for this fellow?"

"Funny!" cried Śaktideva. "Tell me, my dear, who you were and how you were born as a fisher-woman."

On being pressed by him to relate her story, she said, "It is a strictly secret affair. I shall however tell you if you promise to act up to my words."

"Depend upon it, my dear," he said, "I shall swear to it."

She first told him what she desired him to do: " In this island, you will acquire a second wife, and she will become pregnant soon after her marriage. When she is passing the eighth month of her pregnancy, you should cut open her belly and remove the womb. You need not feel pity for her."

When, out of compassion, he was astonished at what she asked him to do, she said, " You should carry out my desire. I have my own reasons for it."

She then began to narrate her story, who she was and how she was born as a fisher-woman:—

" In my previous birth, I was a Vidyādharī. I have now fallen into the world of mortals owing to a curse. I was born in the family of the fisher people because as a Vidhyādharī, I fixed the wires on the Viṇā cutting them with my teeth. When I have fallen into this low state by simply touching with my teeth the dried guts of a cow, who can say what will befall on eating cow's flesh?"

She was interrupted in her speech by one of her brothers who came running in confusion and said to Śaktideva, " Rise and run for your life! A huge wild boar, which has killed many people, is coming this way in great speed."

On hearing his words, Śaktideva descended from the palace, got upon a horse with bow and arrows and chased the boar. On sighting the boar, he shot an arrow at it. The wounded boar disappeared into a

cave and Śaktideva entered the cave in search of it. Instead, he saw a palace in the middle of a large garden. There he also saw a maiden of extraordinary beauty, coming quickly towards him in great delight.

"Who are you, my blessed lady," he asked her, "and why are you so confused?".

"There is a king of the South called Caṇḍavikrama," she replied. "I am his daughter, named Bindurekhā and a maiden. A wicked demon, Jvalitalocana by name, deceitfully carried me off from my father's house and brought me here. He assumed the form of a wild boar and went out in search of game. The hungry animal was shot by some skilful warrior just now. Wounded, he entered the cave and breathed his last. Robbed of my maidenhood, I am in haste to escape."

"Don't be agitated then," replied Śaktideva. "It was I who killed the boar."

"Then tell me who you are," asked the princess.

"I am a Brāhmaṇa, Śaktideva by name."

"Then you will be my husband."

"With pleasure," he said and took her out of the cave. He took her to his house and related to his wife Bindumatī what had happened. With her approval, he married Bindurekhā.

In course of time, Bindurekhā became pregnant. In the eighth month of her pregnancy, Bindumatī, the

senior wife, approached Śaktideva one day and said, "My dear, recollect what you have promised me. This is the eighth month of pregnancy of your second wife. So, go and cut open her belly and take out her womb. You should not violate your own promise."

On hearing her words, Śaktideva was nonplussed for a moment, being agitated by love and pity on one side and by his promise on the other. Slowly he started and sorrowfully approached Bindurekhā. She saw him approach with distress and said, "My dear husband, you appear distressed. I know you are now employed by Bindumatī to take out my womb. That has necessarily to be done by you. It serves some purpose. No cruelty is involved in it; so you should not feel compassion."

"If you still have any doubts," she continued, "please hear the story of Devadatta, which I shall presently relate."

3. STORY OF DEVADATTA

In the days of yore, there lived an opulent Brāhmaṇa, Haridatta by name, in the city called Kambuka. His son, Devadatta became addicted to gambling, although he was educated with care in his youth. One day, when he had gambled away everything including his clothes, he thought it was impossible for him to go to his father's house and so he entered alone a desolate and dilapidated temple and met there a lonely ascetic named Jālapāda, who had achieved several magical feats. When he approached and prostrated himself before the ascetic, he broke silence and kindly welcomed him. After a few minutes of silence, the ascetic enquired the cause of his dejection which the Brāhmaṇa attributed to the loss of his wealth through vices.

"There is no wealth in this world," said the ascetic to Devadatta, "sufficient to satisfy the needs of the vicious. If you want to escape danger, then follow my advice. I have commenced that which brings me the state of a Vidyādhara. You may also achieve it along with me. If you only follow my injunctions, your distress will be at an end."

Promising to do so, Devadatta stayed with him. The next day, the ascetic, accompanied by Devadatta, went to the cemetery in the night and performed worship under a fig tree, offered *Pāyasa*, scattered *Bali* in the different directions and bowed to the tree. Then he said to Devadatta, "In this manner you should everyday perform worship here and say at the end 'O Vidyutprabhā, accept this my worship.' If you do so, I am sure we shall both succeed."

They returned home and from that day Devadatta was daily going to the tree and scrupulously offering worship under it.

One day at the conclusion of the worship a divine lady issued forth from the trunk of the tree which cleft into two, and said to him, "My good Sir, come in; my mistress wants to speak to you."

He entered and there a glittering place encountered his sight, in which he perceived a pleasing lady seated on a couch. While he was musing that that might be the embodied fulfilment of his worship, the beautiful lady rose from her seat, accompanied by the jingling of her ornaments, welcomed him and seated him on the couch.

"Honoured Sir," she said to him, "I am a maiden known as Vidyutprabhā, the daughter of the Yakṣa Chief, Ratnavarṣa. The rigourous ascetic, Jālapāda, has propitiated me and I have to fulfil his object. You are, however, the lord of my life. So accept me as your wife since I am impelled by an ardent desire."

He acquiesced in her proposal and lived happily with her. In course of time, when she became pregnant, he went with her permission to pay a visit to the ascetic, and reported to him, with

hesitation, what had happened since his departure. Being interested in the achievement of his own object, the ascetic said to Devadatta, "Good friend, you have done well; but go again and tear open the belly of the Yakṣa woman and get me her womb." So saying, the ascetic reminded Devadatta of his promise and sent him away. Devadatta returned to his beloved and remained distressed at the thought of the ascetic's words. Vidyutprabhā, however, observed his condition and said to him, "My dear lord, you are depressed, and I can divine why. You are commanded by Jālapāda to remove my womb. Please do so promptly. If you are not prepared to do it," she continued, "I will have to do it myself. There is some purpose in it." When the Brāhmaṇa was not prepared to act as she desired, she cut open her belly herself and took out the womb. She offered it to Devadatta and said, "Take this. It turns its consumer into a Vidyādhara. Though a Vidyādharī, I became a Yakṣī through a curse. This is the end of my curse. I remember my original nature. I shall now turn to my own place. We shall again meet there." Having said this, Vidyutprabhā disappeared.

With a distressed mind, Devadatta took the womb and carried it to the ascetic, Jālapāda. The ascetic roasted the meat and despatched Devadatta to worship Bhairava in the forest. By the time Devadatta returned after performing worship, the ascetic consumed all the meat. Before Devadatta could ask him why he had consumed all the meat, the deceitful Jālapāda turned into a Vidyādhara and flew into the sky, adorned with necklaces and armlets and braced with a sword.

"Alas! How I am deceived by this vicious fellow!" thought Devadatta. "I paid dearly for my sincerity. How can I take revenge on him for this act of deceit? How can I find him who became a Vidyādhara? There is no other means except to propitiate Vetāla."

Resolving thus, Devadatta went to the burial ground in the night, invoked Vetāla in a corpse, worshipped him and offered

him human flesh. When he was not satisfied with it and did not favour him, Devadatta wanted to gratify him by offering his own flesh and began to cut it from his body. Immediately the Vetāla addressed him, " I am pleased with your courage. Don't be rash. My good Sir, what is it that you want me to do ?"

" Lead me to the place of the Vidyādharas," replied the bold Devadatta, " where lives the ungrateful ascetic Jālapāda. I want to take vengeance on the deceiver."

The Vetala took Devadatta on his shoulders and carried him through the air to the abode of the Vidyādharas. There Devadatta saw Jālapāda turned into a Vidyādhara, seated proudly on a throne in a palace and making overtures to the unwilling Vidyutprabhā to marry her with all sorts of false pretences. As soon as he saw Jālapāda, the youthful Devadatta rushed on him, causing immense delight to Vidyutprabhā. Unexpectedly confronted by him, Jālapāda, in his terror and excitement, dropped his sword and fell flat on the ground. Devadatta took up the sword but did not harm him, and even stopped the Vetāla from killing him.

" What is the use of killing this poor sinner!" he said to the Vetāla. " Take him to the earth and keep him in your abode. Let him continue there to lead the life of a Kāpālika again."

As Devadatta spoke these words, the Goddess Pārvatī descended from the sky and appeared before him, and uttered these words as he prostrated himself before her: " My child, I am pleased with this, thy exhibition of unparallelled courage. I, therefore, confer upon thee the royalty of the Vidyādharas." She then transmitted to him the knowledge of all arts and sciences and disappeared.

Taken to earth by the Vetāla, Jālapāda died soon afterwards. United with Vidyutprabhā, Devadatta enjoyed the lordship of the Vidyādharas in great pomp.

Having related this story to her husband, Bindurekhā said to him, " There will be such purposes to be

served. Take out my womb without any compunction, as instructed by Bindumatī."

As Śaktideva still hesitated to commit such a sin, an aerial voice promted him:

"O Śaktideva, " it said, " cut out her womb without any compunction. If you hold its neck with your fist, it will become a sword to you."

Encouraged by the aerial voice, he tore open Bindumatī's belly, plucked the womb and caught hold of the foetus by its neck and immediately it turned into a sword in his hand. Simultaneously, Śaktideva changed into a Vidyādhara, while Bindurekhā disappeared. He then went and reported everything to his first wife, the fisherwoman Bindumatī.

"My lord, we are three sisters, the daughters of the king of Vidyādharas," she said. "We were thrown down from Kanakapurī by a curse. The first is Kanakarekhā, who was seen by you in the city of Vardhamāna; and the second, the end of whose curse was witnessed by you, has also gone back to her city. By the decree of fate, the end of her curse had to come about this way. I am the third, and my curse is at an end now. I have now to go to my own city. Our Vidyādhara bodies are lying there. Our eldest sister, Candraprabhā, is residing there. With the aid of this sword, you should soon come to us. There you will marry all the four of us, offered by our father who is residing in a forest; and you will rule over the city."

When Bindumatī thus related her true story and went to Kanakapurī, Śaktideva followed her to the city

through the air. In that city, the three lifeless divine bodies of the maidens, Kanakarekhā and others, which he saw on couches in the three chambers, were now enlivened and he saw his three wives there accosting him. In addition to these, he saw there the fourth maiden, Candraprabhā, the eldest of all, welcoming him with her tender looks. Welcomed also by all the female servants who were attentive to their duties, he entered the palace and was thus addressed by Candraprabhā, " My dear, the princess, named Kanakarekhā, whom you saw in the city of Vardhamāna, this is she, my sister Candrarekhā. The daughter of the fisher-chief, named Bindumatī, whom you first married in the island of Utsthala, this is she, my sister Śaśirekhā. The princess, abducted by the demon, named Bindurekhā, who next became your wife there, this is she, my sister Śaśiprabhā. So, O blessed one," she continued, " now come to our father along with us and espouse us all, when we are duly offered by him."

The four sisters prostrated before their father, and acquainted him with their desire. When their prayer was supported by a divine voice, the Vidyādhara chief bestowed all his four daughters upon him in marriage. Simultaneously, he conferred upon him the prosperous kingdom of Kanakapurī and his knowledge of all the sciences. And he renamed him with his own name of Śaktivega, as suited to a Vidyādhara. With due honours, he sent his son-in-law with his four wives to rule over the city. Thus Śaktivega entered the city of Kanakapurī as its lord accompanied by his four queens.

THE END

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